

# THE CATHOLIC ART QUARTERLY



1956  
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# TRANSFIGURATION & ADORATION

*In describing the "Magna Carta of the Liturgical Movement" and the pertinent writings of Abbot Ildephonse Herwegen and Dom Odo Casel, Dom Damasus explains how the liturgy of the Church is intrinsically a work of art. This paper is an abbreviated version of the talk Dom Damasus gave at the opening of the C.A.A. National Convention at the College of St. Rose in Albany, in August, 1955.*

*By Damasus Winzen, O.S.B.*

Recently a revealing piece of art news made its way into the press. It concerned a mural that was to have been hung in the Public Library in Dallas, Texas. The mural consisted of a ten by twenty-four foot screen upon which hundreds of painted pieces of metal had been fastened. The City Fathers, who had been asked to pay \$8,700 for the mural, went to view the object of this sizable outlay. When they found it difficult to discover the meaning of the mural, they asked the painter to explain. He promptly declared that it was supposed to convey whatever message the viewers thought it did. The City Fathers immediately saw their opportunity and replied that the only message it conveyed to them was that they should not pay \$8,700 for it.

Reading this fired my zeal to participate in this convention of the Catholic Art Association. We try to counteract the chaos of modern subjectivism in art by a re-emphasis of certain principles developed by Christian philosophers — the Scholastics of the Middle Ages, especially St. Thomas — which confirm in this higher light the principles accepted by the common intelligence of mankind, in the Western as well as in the Eastern tradition. These principles, incidentally, have been briefly, but clearly, explained in a brochure by Walter Shewring entitled "Art in Christian Philosophy" (Matawan, New Jersey: The Sower Press, 1950).

St. Thomas' definition of art as "*recta ratio factibilium*" opens eyes to the fact

that art is not the esoteric caprice of a genius, terribly difficult to handle and still more difficult to understand, but that it is essentially a virtue of the practical intellect which directs the making of a work according to firm standards of intellectual rightness using proper means to attain its purpose. If seen in this light, art loses its fatal association with merely subjective inspiration and emotion, and finds its place in the general framework of human society.

Mr. Shewring, in his brochure, recommends the restoration, even if only in small circles, of sound community life according to the principles of the social encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI, as a way to return to true art. There can be no doubt that the establishment of sound community life is a task as vital today as it was in 1946 when Mr. Shewring published his brochure. It cannot be denied either that, in the pontificate of Pius XII, the whole question of Christian social life has received new light, especially through the publication of the two encyclicals, "*Corporis Mystici*" and "*Mediator Dei*." In these two encyclicals, the spiritual nature of the structure ("*Corporis Mystici*"), as well as the inner life ("*Mediator Dei*") of the Church, have been set forth in a manner which cannot possibly be ignored by the faithful.

These two latter documents form the "magna carta" of what we call "The Liturgical Movement," which for about forty years has endeavored to focus the attention of the faithful on the corporate character of Redemption and to lead them



to a better understanding, as well as to a more active participation in the public worship of the Church. What is done on and around the altar is not merely a ritualistic ornament, but forms the basis of our entire Christian existence. This conviction has spread rapidly through the Church, and it is only natural that the Catholic Art Association, with its strongly social approach to the problems of Christian art, should draw the liturgy into the orbit of its consideration, realizing that both the social nature of Christian art, as well as the spiritual character of the Christian artist, depend on the liturgy as their source and mold.

This may sound a bit presumptuous, and it really is so long as we think of the liturgy in terms of a set of rules and regulations to direct the external worship of the Church. However, this legalistic point of view has been expressly rejected by the Sovereign Pontiff, who states that it is an error to think of the sacred liturgy as merely the outward or visible part of divine worship, an ornamental ceremonial, or as consisting solely of a list of laws according to which the ecclesiastical hierarchy orders the sacred rites to be performed.

The liturgy is rather "the exercise of Christ's priestly function, the public worship which is offered to the Father by our Redeemer as head of the Church; it is also the worship offered by the society of the faithful to its Head and through him to the Eternal Father; in a word, it is the whole worship of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, of the Head and of its members." (*Mediator Dei*, No. 20). The glorification of the Father is the meaning of the life of the Son of God incarnate (Matthew 4:10) which reaches its climax in his *exaltation* on the Cross. There he sanctifies himself, not for himself, but for them, for his children, that they may be sanctified (John 17:19). The sacrifice of the Cross (which includes the Nativity as the preparation and

the Resurrection and Ascension as its acceptance, in short, the whole "*transitus Domini*," the Passover of the Lord) is the highest glorification of the Father and the consecration of mankind. This is the sacrifice of praise which at the same time is the way God shows his salvation to his people. This sacrifice Christ left to his Church. He *handed it over*, "*tradidit*," that she may *celebrate* it.

For us, words have lost their value and weight and true meaning even more than our currency has. Otherwise we would realize that all these terms with which the Word of God proclaims the institution of the great "*mysterium fidei*" of the Mass — the term "*tradere*"; the term "to celebrate"; the word "*facere*," "*poiein*," "do this"; and "in memory, "*eis anamnesin*" — emphasize the *reality*, the spiritual reality, of the sacrifice of the New and Eternal Covenant, the heart of the liturgy. If we would realize this and take time for loving contemplation of the authentic sources of our faith, in Scripture, in the Fathers, and in the early liturgical documents, take time to feel our way into the original meaning of the keywords of our sacred Christian language, which through too much use have lost their original splendor and have been covered with all kinds of cheap associations, we would discover why the liturgy has been in former centuries the mother of Christian art.

It was indeed this way of loving historical research which caused men like Abbot Ildephonse Herwegen or Dom Odo Casel to find the inner relation between liturgy and art. The first attempt to give expression to this inner relation was a conference given by Abbot Ildephonse around 1911, and later published under the title "The Art Principle of the Liturgy," now available in a re-print by the Liturgical Press under the title "The Liturgy's Inner Beauty." In this conference, the Abbot explains that the liturgy of the Church is intrinsically a work of



art, because it performs a work of *transfiguration*. Take the rite of baptism or that of the dedication of a church, says Abbot Ildephonse, and you will see how the Church as a true artist takes its material, the deformed human being or the church-building, and transforms it in the power of the Risen Saviour, who acts through sacramental signs, into the image and likeness which reflects the glory of God in the redeemed soul or the splendor of the New Jerusalem in the church. The art-principle of the liturgy, said Abbot Ildephonse, is that of transfiguration. This was in 1911.

As his ideas developed, two other brochures appeared, one under the title "*Kirche und Seele*" (Salzburg, 1926), the other, "*Christliche Kunst und Mystereium*," "Christian Art and the Mystery" (Tübingen 1928). In the first, the Abbot tried to show that Christian art reflects, in its history, the development from an attitude centered in the mystery of Christ, that is, in the manifestation of his redeeming love on the Cross and its sacramental representation in the Mass and the other sacraments, to a later one which puts the emphasis rather on the human reactions in the individual soul.

Some people who have recently referred to the third brochure — I mention Fr. Bouyer in his book *Liturgical Piety* — forget that the author expressly states that it is not his intention to play "objective piety" against "subjective piety," but that it is his deepest conviction that only both together make up the fulness of the Catholic spirit. They forget that he is concerned with presenting the historical fact that, with the beginning of the 13th century, Christian art gradually adopts new ways and topics and means which lead it further and further away from the liturgy.

Abbot Ildephonse actually illustrates his position by pointing out the change in the pictorial representation of the Last Supper with its emphasis on the

eschatological, or sacramental, aspect as it is found in the catacombs and in Ravenna, and the psychological presentation of Leonardo da Vinci, or, as in the work of Tintoretto, the immersion into a mass of narrative with all possible kinds of detail, detail which does honor to the artistic talent of the artist, but has nothing to do with the spiritual significance of the scene.



The third brochure tackles the problem more from the center: "*Christliche Kunst und Mystereium*," "Christian Art and the Mystery." "Mystereium" is, in the mind of the Abbot, simply Christ himself, as man and as God, who, now as the exalted, glorified Lord, is alive in the Church's liturgy. He forms the heart of ecclesiastical painting and architecture in the Byzantine, Eastern Church. There the "icon" remains a part of the liturgy as an object of veneration. It is made under certain rules by "ordained" painters who deliberately avoid the realism of the flesh in order to make their icons an "*epiklesis*" of the Holy Spirit whereby the one who contemplates them is transformed into the same image, from clarity unto clarity, as by the Lord of the spirit.

Abbot Herwegen's three brochures came into being under the pressure of the busy life of an abbot. He certainly was a very learned man, but he also realized



that his conferences had more value as stimulants than as "finished products." Odo Casel had more opportunity for quiet, patient research, and therefore his article on "*Altchristliche Kunst und Christismysterium*" has more of the character of a careful historical study of the spirit of the earliest Christian art. (cf. *Liturgisches Jahrbuch*, 1932, XII, p. 1-86). He limits himself to the catacombs. He points out that the pictures we see there are neither historical narratives, nor are they merely doctrinal in character, nor exclusively sepulchral, but are the expressions of the inmost heart of the Christian religion, the life in Christ as the mystery of the Divine Agape "which has been hidden before ages and generations, but now is clearly shown to his saints" (Colossians 1-26), the "mystery of the kingdom of God" (Luke 8, 10) which forgives sin and gives eternal life, conquering death by death and sharing the peace of the Resurrection with those who believe that the Christ is the KYRIOS.

### TRUE CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

Take, for example, says Dom Odo, the familiar scene of Noe in the ark, one single person standing in a box, his arms lifted up in prayer, and a dove with the olive branch flying toward him. Evidently this is not an historical narrative as is found in the Middle Ages or in our present day bible illustrations, with their loads of animals, several storeys of ark, people looking out from the windows, others drowning in the flood, etc., etc. The whole scene is deliberately reduced to its essentials and the whole accent is on the representation of the "*soteria*," the salvation of which Noe is the "type." He stands there as the "eighth soul" who was saved through water, faith, and wood and who now, praying, trusting, and thanking, swims safely over the deadly waters, waiting for the dove of peace.

The same idea underlies the other representations in the catacombs, such as

that of the three youths in the fiery furnace who are safe in the presence of the "Logos" who not only assists them but also speaks through them in the hymn of the "*Benedicite*." There are other purely symbolic representations such as the Good Shepherd, the Orpheus, the fisherman. No attempt is made to give them some kind of portrait similarity with the historical Christ.

These symbols do not, at the same time, surrender their secret to everybody. They speak a language known only to the initiated. "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand." (Luke 8:10). The manifestation of the divine "anthropophilia," the humaneness and kindness of God our Saviour, remains hidden from the eyes of the "profane" that the pearls may not be thrown before the swine. But no attempt is made in this early Christian art to speak in a transcendent or abstract style, because it would immediately remove the "*soteria*," from the view of the faithful while in reality its *presence* is the theme of the catacombs.

I have dwelt at some length on the ideas of Abbot Herwegen and Odo Casel on the relationship between Christian art and the liturgy because they help us to see this relation from within, rather than from without, in the light of the Glorified Christ in whom all fullness dwells. (cf. Col. 1:19).

Further, if art, in general, is the "*recta ratio factibilium*," we cannot overlook the relation of this concept to the Divine Word, who is the heart of the "*mysterium*" of the liturgy and who manifests his invisible Father through "works" which in Holy Scripture are described with all the vocabulary of the artist. He is the "glory" of the Father and therefore the archetype of all beauty. He is the "master-mind," who not only "creates" out of nothing, but who by "dividing"



and "making" turns chaos into a temple where, according to the rhythm of day and night, the entire host of living beings move, each one according to its kind, in the solemn dance, under the leadership of man whom the Divine Artist "forms" in his own image and likeness. Like a potter he "gives shape" to man's body. Like an architect he "builds" Eve from Adam's side. Like a gardener he "plants" the garden of delight. After the fall, as the first tailor, he "makes" the new garment for the exiles, "clothes" the naked in his infinite mercy. The "work" he has begun in creation is consummated in the work of Redemption, when he again takes "the dust of the earth" — I mean us sinners and enemies of God — and taking on "the likeness of sinful flesh" in his Incarnation and Death, "breathes" into it the Spirit of life after his Resurrection, "building" the new Eve, his Church, through the Apostles, "cultivating," like a Divine Gardener, his vineyard through the sacraments, "clothing" us in the new garment of divine nature. This is the "work" he carries on in the liturgy of the Church, which therefore is the "school" of the same art for all Christians.

#### THE MATERIALS OF LITURGY AND ART

Furthermore, we might do well to consider the material cause of the liturgy as a "field" of Christian art. The sacramental world is a continuation of the Incarnation. The Word becomes flesh again in the sacred signs and symbols through which salvation is being applied to the wounds of mankind throughout history. The spiritual wealth of salvation becomes visible in sacred vessels, garments, words, gestures, melodies, buildings. For centuries this vastly diversified field of the liturgy has been the chief means of expression for Christian art. The invitation from the liturgy of the Feast of Tabernacles, "Bring beauty to the altar" has been followed by the Church, at times even to an extent which was apt to ob-

scure the spiritual "truth" of the liturgy. While it is certainly not true that the "adoration in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23) *excludes* any visible manifestation of spiritual reality, it must also be kept in mind that it is part of the "*recta ratio factibilium*" in the field of the liturgy to reveal by hiding, to use the things of this world as if one would not use them. Nothing is as killing of the true spirit of the liturgy as the proud display of material wealth in all kinds of precious materials which have no relation to the place where worship is offered. A church represents the section of the country where it stands. It is not "imported" from various places of the earth, but it is a hymn which this section of the country sings, with whatever it has to offer to God.

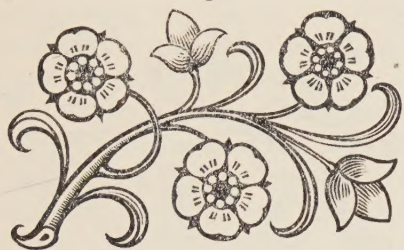
#### ULTIMATE PURPOSES

"That in all things God may be glorified." This sentence from the Rule of St. Benedict indicates the final cause of all our actions and specifically the final cause of Christian art. Because the liturgy is the public glorification of the Father through the glorified Christ in his Church, Christian art will naturally seek its "fulfillment" in the liturgy. There a Christian artist finds the true spirit of glorification. The word from the Gloria: "we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory" has to be the motto for the Christian artist who is not bent on the expression of his own self, but in humble obedience considers his work as a *service* which he renders to his Lord. Glory cannot be given to the Father by those who do not listen to his Word, and who could listen to the Word without being drawn into his Love. The liturgy is the school where we learn how to adore God *corporately*, as a whole. It draws us into that Spirit who fills the whole earth and lifts it up as a sacrifice to the Father, everything in its own kind. Christian art can never be first concerned with man and then with God's glory. It is the other way around. The sacrifice of praise is the way which gives salvation to



man. This "law" dominates the whole structure of the liturgy and makes it truly "the work of God." Christian art should follow the same law in order to regain the inner dimensions which it has lost during centuries of individualism and sentimentality.

To attain this end of glorifying the Father through the Lord in the Church, the spirit of the liturgy has to become the



inner form of the Christian artist. It is very revealing to study the development of the representation of the glorified Lord in the history of Christian art. One will find that toward the end of the 14th century these representations do not only become very rare, but they also have lost completely their original majesty. For centuries it had been taken for granted that a "church" (the word is derived from the Greek KYRIAKON which means "house of the KYRIOS") showed in the main apse a fresco or mosaic of the *Majestas Domini* in which the glory of the exalted Lord (KYRIOS), who after all was the "landlord" of this house, was represented, usually in the forms which the vision of Ezechiel had provided. We find the same subject in innumerable illustrated manuscripts. It may be said without exaggeration that the spirit of Christian art has found its most perfect expression in these representations. There was a great inner power alive in the artists who executed these representations of the *Majestas Domini*, a power which could only be derived from the living experience of the liturgy of the Church. In the pre-gothic and gothic period this power has vanished. The representations of the KYRIOS where they are still at-

tempted become "bourgeois." The human element takes over. If we look at our churches today, we will find that the *Majestas Domini* has ceased to be represented. The glory of the "image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, in whom were created all things in the heavens and on earth, things visible and things invisible, in whom all things hold together, who is the head of his Body, the Church, who is the firstborn from the dead" (*cf.* Col 1: 15-20) seems to be beyond the grasp of Christian art in our days. As a result, the Christian artist has also lost the deeper spiritual realization of the Church as the Body of such a Head, as "the completion of him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:23) and as the instrument through which "there be made known to the Principalities and the Powers in heaven the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished through Christ Jesus our Lord." (Ephesians 3:10). It is of primary importance for a re-birth of Christian art that this consciousness of our being "citizens with the saints and members of God's household, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the head stone" (Ephesians 2:19) become alive again in the hearts of Christians today. This would provide the "atmosphere" in which a Christian artist could work. But where can we get it if not through a living participation in the liturgy of the Church?

### THE LIVING TRADITION

As indispensable as the spirit of the liturgy is as the inner form of Christian art, her external influence seems to be much less defined in the New Covenant than it was in the Old. The classical text on sacred art which we find in Chapter 31 of the Book of Exodus tells us that Beseleel whom God had "filled with a divine spirit of wisdom and understanding and skill in every craft" had to make



all the things exactly as God had ordered him to make them. Nothing was left to his own imagination. This was done to make it absolutely clear that in the field of Divine Revelation *everything* depends on the Will of God and not on man's invention. For the same reason God ordered a fence to be made around the mountain where he would appear, and nobody was allowed to approach God on his own; and the Law which Moses received had been written by "the Finger of God" on tablets of stone to keep it free of all human accretions. However, in the New Covenant the Law written on stone has been fulfilled in the Law which the Holy Spirit writes into the hearts of men. The law has ceased to be a "letter," it is a living force — grace. The worship of the New Israel, therefore, is not an unalterable law anymore but a living organism which may be changed and adapted to various circumstances and exigencies. The liturgy of the Church does not impose upon the Christian artist a rigid external "canon." In this regard the Western Church has always been more "liberal" than the Eastern Church. However, there is also a danger that this liberty may be abused, that the wishes and thoughts of man become more important than the truth and glory of the God of our fathers. This danger is especially acute in an age as ours when the sense of continuity with the past is being lost in the intoxication of "progress." The idea that the latest is always better than what we had before is dangerous when it is injudiciously applied to the Church which is a living structure built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, into which we are being fitted as stones, no longer children tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, but rather invited to practice truth in love and so grow up in all things in him who is the head, Christ. (Ephesians 4:14). The Christian artist has to be steeped in the precious deposit if

Divine Truth which God has committed to his Church in Holy Scripture as well as in her living tradition is to be preserved. He has to have the "*sentire cum ecclesia*" and he has to know the language of faith because he has to give witness to the Truth. Christian art is an important part of the teaching office of the Church. The individual artist has to realize his responsibility as an interpreter of the treasure



which tradition has handed down to us. One of the reasons for the decay of Christian art in our days is the appalling ignorance of Holy Scripture which we find so often, not only among the artists but also among those who tell them what to do. The result is an astounding lack of imagination and the endless repetition everywhere of a few commonplace topics. The only thing the artist can do is to "doll them up" in a way which may strike the imagination of the public. But because the imagination of the public has never been fed upon "the real thing" and has been formed instead by the standards of a completely secularized civilization the "*recto ratio factibilium*" of Christian art has no chance. The Christian artist needs a living Church as the "room" in which he can work, and again we must say that there is no other way to form this "room" than living participation in the liturgy of the Church.

#### RELATIONSHIP OF PIETY AND SKILL

From what we have said so far it is evident that the liturgy is intimately related to Christian art, not only as the field in which it can work, but also as the end and as the internal as well as external form. I would like to add a warning,



however, that the liturgy does not produce artists. The sacraments are the efficient cause of sanctifying as well as of actual grace in us. Baptism makes us Christians, but it does not make us artists. Piety is no substitute for skill. The "*recta ratio factibilium*" is not a gift of the Holy Ghost. It belongs essentially to the order of nature, which can never be replaced by grace. No short-cut is allowed to the Christian artist, and his art is not "good" because it is inspired by pious feelings. Grace builds on the foundation of nature, and Christian art is based upon the "*recta ratio factibilium*" which has to be developed through a long process of training. Christian art as art consists in the natural habit of the practical intellect. Still, if we consider Christian art as Christian, it is certainly related to the liturgy also in the line of efficient causality. To deny this would mean to destroy the existential relation between the Christian artist and Christian art, because efficient causality terminates in the existence of the effect — brings it into being. The fact that in the Eastern Church the painter of icons receives a blessing, is "ordained" as it were, can only be understood in the light of an inner, existential relation between the new nature which the artist has received through his incorporation into the Mystical Body of Christ and what he "makes" in his capacity as a Christian. If what he "makes" forms part of the corporate worship of the Church, his work receives a sacramental quality. A real "incarnation" takes place. Whoever con-

templates the icon of the Holy Trinity by Andrew Rublev will realize that it "contains" in some way what it represents. It is "existential." It is not the product of some artistic genius, of an exalted moment, of virtuosity, which would have nothing to do with virtue or the Holy Spirit. It is the work of a humble artisan, whose brush is guided by obedience to the reality which he serves, by a loving, contemplative obedience, which truly makes his painting a prayer.

### CONCLUSION

All I have been able to do in this paper is to skim the horizon of the manifold relation between the liturgy and Christian art. The better we understand the true character of the liturgy as the continuation through space and time of the saving activity of Christ, the eternal Highpriest, in his Church, and the more we strip our concept of art of the deformations which it has suffered in an individualistic and romantic past, the more intimate this relation becomes. It is a wide field which opens here before the members of the Catholic Art Association, a field which is not new to us, but which is so central and comprehensive and vital that we should constantly return to it and start from it all over again, until we understand fully, as Christians and as artists, the triumphant words of St. Paul: "All things are yours, whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come. All are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (I Cor. 3, 22f).





# THE MIRACLE PLAY AS AN ART FORM

*Bringing scholarship to bear on the question of the artistic character of the medieval liturgical dramas, Miss Dunn analyzes their dramatic structure according to Aristotelian principles. This paper served as fitting introduction to the stage performance of House by the Stable presented by the Newton College Players on the occasion of the New England Regional Convention of the Catholic Art Association at Newton College of the Sacred Heart, in December, 1955.*

By E. Catherine Dunn

This is a terrifying moment for any person to enter the controversy over the medieval drama as an art form. A new book on the English religious plays of the Middle Ages has but recently come from the Oxford University Press, a book in which Professor Hardin Craig expresses disapproval of all who approach medieval drama as works of art.<sup>1</sup> He writes that practically no conscious artistic intention existed in the medieval playwrights, especially in English dramatics. The task I have undertaken is therefore a perilous one; but the road of medieval dramatic scholarship has always been a difficult one in our century.

The literary historian has viewed with distaste the advent of the literary critic into medieval dramatic studies. (Such conflicting claims to literary territory may seem very strange to musicians and painters, who have probably not been subjected to the fragmentation of their disciplines as we in literature have been.) Moreover, the medieval drama is probably the last of the literary areas to elicit the attention of aesthetic critics.<sup>2</sup> Those equipped to study it as an art form have hesitated to call it art. Long regarded as a form of sermon or homily or perhaps as a document in medieval sociology, the

drama has only begun to claim a place in its own right. The colossal task of establishing definite texts and editorial commentary was the work of the years from about 1875 to 1935. Into this category fall the great achievements of Professor Karl Young<sup>3</sup> (for the medieval Latin drama) and of the Early English Text Society (for the English vernacular). But few and scattered have been the attempts to make aesthetic analyses of the texts themselves. In 1929, Professor George R. Coffman<sup>4</sup> made an eloquent "Plea for the Study of the Corpus Christi Plays as Dramatic Art"; but his eloquence went largely unheeded for many years. At the turn of the half-century (in 1950) medieval dramatic scholarship was still in the curious position of attracting only those who valued the plays as historical documents, and of repelling those who feared the plays as rather barbaric and juvenile pieces of composition.

It was in 1950, however, that Professor Mary Marshall addressed the English Institute on "Aesthetic Values of the Liturgical Drama."<sup>5</sup> Her essay marked out the paths which should be followed in future study of the plays and also gave to an American audience some indication of the

<sup>1</sup>Hardin Craig, *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: the Clarendon Press 1955), Introduction, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup>Rev. Harold Gardiner, S.J., *Mysteries' End*, Yale Studies in English, Vol. 103 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946), p. xi.

<sup>3</sup>Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, 2 vols. (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1933).

<sup>4</sup>George R. Coffman, *Studies in Philology*, XXVI (1929), 411-24.

<sup>5</sup>Mary Marshall, "Plea for the Study of the Corpus Christi Plays as Dramatic Art," *English Institute Essays*, ed. Alan S. Downer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), pp. 89-115.



German aesthetic criticism in this field, a criticism many years ahead of our own. There is little doubt that the next decade or two will witness the steady increase of such literary studies applied to the miracle plays and moralities.

What is the key problem to be faced in these endeavors? I think it is the problem of determining the principles upon which medieval plays can be analyzed. We are well aware that practically no knowledge of the ancient classical drama of Greece existed in the early Middle Ages. Even the concept of theater and of dramatic performance by actors was lost for centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire. The medieval liturgical drama was an independent creation and it is really difficult to decide whether Aristotelian or Horatian dramatic principles can be properly applied to it. If I may express an opinion on so important a problem, I would say that a cautious use of Aristotelian theory of the drama can be quite valuable in this work. What makes the *Poetics* of Aristotle a helpful instrument is not its account of the Greek drama but rather Aristotle's analytical perception of what drama *is, per se*. Many of the deductions made by Aristotle from the Greek specimens are universal in their nature and are valid as criteria for any successful play — ancient, medieval, or modern. After all, it is improbable that Shakespeare knew the *Poetics*, but many of Aristotle's observations about the tragic hero and the tragic flaw throw light upon the greatness of the Shakespearean characters. If the best of the medieval plays, therefore, can hold up under the light of some Aristotelian principles, it would seem that the plays deserve consideration as works of art, regardless of whether or not the dramatists intended them as such. Let us turn to the problem in hand and make some partial analyses.

#### ORIGIN OF MEDIEVAL DRAMA

We know that the religious drama of

the Middle Ages arose in the 10th century in connection with the liturgical services of the Church. The monumental work of Yale's great scholar, Karl Young, presents in splendid detail the gradual development of a Latin drama from the tropes or embellishments added to the Introit, first of the Easter, and then of the Christmas, Mass. As long as these elaborations of the liturgy remained lyrical they were sung in the Mass; as they became dramatic, through impersonation and dialogue, they were removed from their original place and attached to the recitation of the Divine Office, usually at Matins. By the 12th century a strong tradition of dramatic composition had been established at certain great monastic centers and cathedral towns. Two hundred years of experimentation and study had created basic patterns and encouraged widespread imitation, as a famous school of musical and literary composition flourished successively at Limoges, at St. Gall, at Rouen, or Orléans.

The Latin liturgical plays achieved the status of artistic compositions in many centers, I think, and if they were never equalled by the vernacular imitations in French and English, they at least served as models which the vernacular writers could follow. It is important to remember that England also had a Latin liturgical drama in the high Middle Ages, flourishing at such places as Winchester, Lincoln, Salisbury, and London. Almost all of the manuscripts have perished, probably destroyed by the fury of the Reformation, but cathedral and monastic records establish existence of the manuscripts beyond dispute. The many surviving texts of Latin plays from France and Germany enable us to study their artistic qualities with ease, and to recreate, within limits, the lost dramas of England.

The successive flourishing of several important centers of dramatic writing in Germany and France is the index of the artistic achievements on the Continent.



The culmination of this long series of experimental endeavors was the work of the Benedictine monastery near Orléans, in France. This monastery, known as S.-Benoît-sur-Loire, was located in Fleury and the famous manuscript containing its Latin plays is commonly referred to as the *Fleury Play-Book*.<sup>6</sup> The proximity of



Fleury to Orléans brought the monks into association with the great 12th century Renaissance of classical studies and creative writing which marked that area, an area known as the poetic capital of France in the century under discussion. No reader of the *Fleury Play-Book* is likely to deny the literary sophistication and the beauty of these dramas. I am reminded of an observation made by Mr. Van Wyck Brooks that the poets and painters of any age must work in the world-current of their day. Great artists do not reach maturity, he says, unless they are in contact and rivalry with other geniuses of world renown, in order that an "antagonism of talent" may force them to surpass themselves.<sup>7</sup> The world-

current of the 12th century certainly flowed through Orléans and Fleury; poets there rivalled and then surpassed those of other monastic and cathedral centers and exerted an influence far and wide in western Europe. It has been stated by Marius Sepet, a great historian of the medieval drama, that 12th century composers of Latin plays were men skilled in literary and musical arts, at the same time clerics and "trouvères," men who might well have written a *chanson de geste* before entering upon their monastic life, and who would often be worthy of the title once given to the English monk, William Melton — "professor of holy pageantry" (*docteur ès drames sacres*).<sup>8</sup>

The plays created by these clerics are worthy of close study. Professor Mary Marshall, in her paper delivered at the English Institute, explored the question of aesthetic values in the Latin liturgical plays. She spoke of these dramas as attaining artistic status because of the very circumstances under which they were produced. As long as they were presented in Latin and not in the vernacular they reached only a limited audience, and that audience a clerical or scholastic one, trained in the language and the liturgy of the Church. The members of a monastic community would not need the drama as a means of instruction in the faith. The content of the plays was "too deeply rooted in belief for intellectual didacticism," and therefore the composer was free to concentrate on the artistic effects of his work. The drama, then, was "presentational" rather than "discursive."<sup>9</sup> I think Professor Marshall's accurate distinction means that the purpose of *edification* may well have been present in the medieval writer's mind, but that edification is not synonymous with *didacticism* and does not as readily interfere with the

<sup>6</sup>Grace Frank, *The Medieval French Drama* (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 44.

<sup>7</sup>Van Wyck Brooks, *The Flowering of New England* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1941), p. 163.

<sup>8</sup>Marius Sepet, *Le drame chretien au moyen age* (Paris: Didier et Cie, 1878), pp. 122-3.

<sup>9</sup>*Loc. cit.*, p. 93. (Susanne Langer's terminology.)



process of artistic creation.

#### DRAMATIC STRUCTURE

If the Latin liturgical play achieved the status of an art it was because it attained a complexity of beautiful design equivalent to poetic form. I mean by poetic form in drama an interaction of several elements such as plot line, characterization, embellished language, patterned sound, etc. The harmony and fitness among such compositional elements constitutes the beauty of a literary work and raise it above the univocal and simple significance of a prose structure. The liturgical playwright, of course, met certain restrictions upon his freedom to manipulate event, character and speech, because he was dealing with a religious narrative whose sacred truth could not be violated. The rigidity of these given materials, however, could be offset by other compositional elements of great beauty and emotional dynamism, for the playwright had at his disposal the use of several resources which even the later secular drama could not command as easily, viz., an expertly trained monastic choir, the architectural beauty of a great cathedral background or monastic chapel, and the stylized formality of ecclesiastical vestments adapted to the needs of dramatic costume. Poetic form in the Latin play was literally a relationship among auditory and visual arts, and the total context of such a harmony was at least *potentially* as rich in artistic beauty as the ancient Greek drama or the modern Italian opera. The occasion of such a Latin play was a liturgical hour of the Divine Office, usually Matins, and the community prayer against which the little drama was staged shed its echoes upon the play, thus adding to the rich complexity of the total design.

Perhaps modern critics of the drama have been reluctant to acknowledge the presence of artistic form in medieval plays because they do not find in the simple plots of the Christmas, Easter, and

Passion plays the conflict which they deem essential to drama. They look for the clash of elemental forces or of human wills so well known in the plays of a Marlowe or Shakespeare. I would not attempt to argue for an elaborately organized interplay of protagonist and antagonist in the Latin plays, but I think that the manipulation of emotional forces is far more complex than a superficial reading uncovers. Professor Mary Marshall, whom I have previously mentioned, speaks of the "PERIPETEIA" in the Easter play. (PERIPETEIA is the Greek term which Aristotle uses for the surprise created by the dramatic reversal of expectation in the outcome of a play. It may be a sudden change from joy to sorrow or from sorrow to joy. It is the major crisis in the drama.) Now, in the Easter play, there is a reversal of emotion as the atmosphere of Calvary or of the Holy Sepulchre is suddenly turned into the joy of the Resurrection. The suffering of Good Friday, shared in sympathy by the audience contemplating the spectacle, still hovers over the three Marys as they approach the tomb. A dramatic tension is created and rises to a climax in the grief of Mary Magdalene. Then suddenly the tension is dispelled and it yields to the glory of the Easter victory, as the liturgical chants are transformed from dirges into Alleluias. The narrative is fraught with the overtones of a great dramatic conflict between Heaven and Hell, and Heaven wins the victory. This reversal of emotion, this creation and release of tension, are of the essence of drama.<sup>10</sup> What is at stake in the conflict? not the tragic destiny of a Hamlet or a Tamburlaine, not the fate of Macbeth's kingdom, but the soul of Man, of Everyman, of

<sup>10</sup>John Manly, "The Miracle Play in Medieval England," in *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, VII (1927), 140-41. Professor Manly did not consider genuine drama of frequent occurrence in medieval England.



each and every human being in the audience.

The Easter scene from the Fleury manuscript will give us an idea of this dramatic structure found in the best of the Latin plays. As Karl Young demonstrated with painstaking care, the *Visitatio Sepulchri* developed gradually from the simple representation of a dialogue between the three Marys and the angels at the tomb.



In its later, finished form, the play has a tripartite structure including the approach of the women to the tomb, the race of Peter and John to the sepulchre and finally, the appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene. The tension created by the grief of the women is unrelieved until the third part. Even though the angel announces to them that Christ has arisen, they continue to lament in the same kind of lyric expression with which they have approached the grave. In the second incident, Peter and John view the empty tomb and the cloths which had bound the Lord, but no burst of joy escapes the Apostles' lips. In stunned bewilderment

John asks whether the Sacred Body was stolen and why the grave cloths were left behind. The third incident begins with Mary Magdalene's repetition of her plaintive verses as she weeps:

*Heu dolor, heu quam dira doloris angustia, etc.*<sup>11</sup>

(Alas the grief, alas the bitter anguish of sorrow . . .)

Only at the appearance of Christ in the guise of the "Hortulanus," the gardener, does her weeping stop.<sup>12</sup> It would be difficult to find a more powerful and beautiful recognition scene than that of Christ's "Maria!" and her reply, "Rabboni!" as she casts herself at his feet. The reversal has occurred — PERIPETEIA in the Aristotelian sense and also ANAGNORISIS (recognition). The audience watching the spectacle is ready to burst into the hymn of praise as the choir chants "*Te Deum Laudamus*" and brings both the play and the liturgical hour of Matins to an exultant finale.<sup>13</sup>

#### ENGLISH RELIGIOUS PLAYS

When we turn from the best of the Latin dramas to the English religious plays, we find a more difficult critical task before us. Most of the plays in the vernacular are parts of a lengthy cycle beginning with the creation of Adam and ending with the last judgement. In its totality, a cycle is much more complex than even the most highly developed Latin play, for the latter usually represents the narrative of only one liturgical feast, such as Christmas or Easter. A vernacular cycle, on the other hand, covering many events of both the Old and the New Testament, required hours or even several days in the presentation. But herein lay

<sup>11</sup>Young, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 394-5.

<sup>12</sup>Aristotle says that the *recognition* is most effective when it is accompanied by *reversal*. (*Poetics*, 1452 a).

<sup>13</sup>Marshall, *loc. cit.*, in speaking of PERIPETEIA in the Easter play is following the suggestions of the German critics, J. Schwietering and H. Brinkmann.



one of the special features of its artistry, for it was drama on a vast scale, whose very magnitude gave it a splendor that the little Latin play could scarcely achieve. As Professor G. R. Coffman has remarked, we cannot experience the cosmic sweep and the awesome grandeur of the vernacular cycles today; we can witness only a scene or two extracted from the total context.<sup>14</sup> Twenty-five years ago Miss Effie MacKinnon called attention to the necessity of analyzing the total structure of a cycle in order to discover its pattern, or what in Aristotelian terms would be known as *taxis* (design). Miss MacKinnon herself showed the way by studying the structure of the York plays, but there has been little effort since that essay to follow her lead. I have suggested such a study to one of my graduate students in the hope that it will be a fruitful work of aesthetic criticism. At present, I can only indicate the kind of analysis advocated by Miss MacKinnon.

She divides the York cycle into three parts: a preparation, a central action, and a conclusion. The preparatory action is concerned with the need of salvation after Adam's fall, and with God's saving of a chosen people for his Divine purposes, using Noah, Abraham, and Moses as his instruments.<sup>15</sup> The central action is, of course, the Redemption of man by Christ, whose life is dramatized from birth to death, and culminates in his Resurrection. The conclusion of the cycle is a kind of epilogue, with the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Spirit, the glorification of the Blessed Virgin and finally, the Last Judgement.<sup>16</sup> In such an analysis the individual plays do not simply follow one another in succession, but they are constituents of larger themes and are built into a gradually rising action whose climax is

carefully planned and deferred until the great PERIPETEIA, the reversal, of Easter morning. In a sense, I would say that the whole cycle is really an elaborate Easter play, in which the Redemption is still the focal point as it was in the earlier Latin play. The conflict is still that between Heaven and Hell, the victory that of "*Resurrexit sicut dixit*" and the recognition scene still that of Mary Magdalene's ecstatic "Rabboni!"

After one has grasped the larger design of a cycle drama, he should look more closely at the compositional units and search for literary merit on a smaller scale. One must, of course, admit that the English cycle plays show fluctuating levels of achievement. The frequent variation between sublimity and homely realism<sup>17</sup> produces at one moment a fine counterpoint or contrast of tones; at another moment it yields only a discord, or a descent from exaltation to bathos. Nevertheless, a goodly number of the individual scenes are fine in a stylistic sense, containing the kind of verbal complexity and harmony which is so characteristic of medieval rhetoric and poetic.<sup>18</sup> Style in this sense is the Aristotelian *lexis*, as opposed to total design. In order to appreciate such beauty one must read the plays in the Middle English. No translation, however competent, can reproduce the distinctive effects of the language as it was spoken by the men of Wakefield, York, Chester, and Coventry in the 15th century. Inseparably bound up with the imagery and the emotional content of the speech is the sound structure

<sup>17</sup>Erich Auerbach discusses this variation in style level as it appears in the Anglo-Norman play, "*Le mystere d'Aam*," in *Mimesis*, tr. Willard Trask (Princeton: The University Press, 1953), Ch. VII.

<sup>18</sup>Professor Hatzfeld says that the detailed *lexis* is more characteristic of medieval literature in general than is the large design (*taxis*). ("Esthetic Criticism Applied to Medieval Romance Literature," *Romance Philology*, I (1948), 324.)

<sup>14</sup>*Loc. cit.*, p. 417.

<sup>15</sup>Effie MacKinnon, "Notes on the Dramatic Structure of the York Cycle," *Studies in Philology*, XXVIII (1931), pp. 439-40.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*



of the verse; especially is this true of the alliterative poetry used in some of the York plays. Ideally, one should approach these plays with the echoes of *Piers Plowman* or of *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight* ringing in his head, since the poetry of the 14th century alliterative revival was a norm and pattern for much of the dramatic verse which followed it.

I would like to comment upon one such alliterative drama — the York play of "The Birth of Jesus."<sup>19</sup> Although a short scene, it has a rich poetic texture and reveals artistic power of a considerable maturity. It is written in a stanza form of seven lines with alternate rhyme. There are four stresses in each line, just as in Old English verse. The dramatic structure of the scene has an undulating rhythm which varies from the homeliest dialogue on the weather to the most enraptured lyricism of adoration. The flexibility of the stanza allows the writer to manipulate it for a whole octave of emotional expressions. Joseph says, e.g., as he faces a night in the stable:

A! Lorde, what the wedir is colde!  
The fellest freese that euere I feyld!  
I pray God helpe tham that is olde,  
And namely tham that is vnwelde,  
So may I saie. (11.71-5)

When Mary worships the Divine Child, however, her speech rises to the ardent exultation of a Christmas liturgical hymn. It has something of the verbal paradox and artful word-play which Father Walter Ong has noted in the medieval Latin hymns of the Church.<sup>20</sup> Mary addresses the Holy Babe as her Father and her Son, as her Child and her King:

Hayle, my Lord God! Hayle, prince of pees!

<sup>19</sup>Reprinted in Joseph Quincy Adams, *Chief Pre-Shakesperean Dramas* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924), pp. 142-4.

<sup>20</sup>Walter J. Ong, S.J., "Wit and Mystery: A Revaluation in Medieval Latin Hymnody," *Speculum*, XXII (1947), pp. 310-41.

Hayle, my fadir! and hayle, my sone!  
Hayle, souereyne sege all synnes to sesse!

Hayle, God and man in erth to wonne!  
Hayle, thurgh whos myht  
All this worlde was first be-gonne,  
Merknes and light.

Sone, as I am sympill sugett of thyne,  
Vowchsaiffe, swete sone, I pray the,  
That I myght the take in the {r} army's  
of myne,  
And in this poure wede to arraie the.

(11.57-67)

The lyric ardor of the prayer as it is spoken by Mary is supported not only by the paradoxical word-play, but also by the sound patterns themselves. The frequent repetition of the ejaculatory word "hayle" provides recurrence of the liquid sound "l" a soft and musical consonant which balances and offsets the harsh gutturals of the northern dialect occurring in words like "myht," "light," and "thurgh." The alliteration has been so carefully planned that occasionally the final stressed sound in one line introduces the alliterated sounds of the following line. Such a device was a consciously cultivated one in late Anglo-Saxon and in medieval English poetry.<sup>21</sup> It is artistry of a high order and not the work of a journeyman versifier. Considered as part of a carefully worked verbal pattern, it indicates that even the vernacular mystery play sometimes reveals the deliberate intention to create a thing of beauty — in short, a work of art.

#### "HOUSE BY THE STABLE"

The medieval plays which I have been reviewing, both in the Latin and in the English, are miracle plays,<sup>22</sup> i.e., plots based upon Biblical narrative and connected, at least in origin, with the litur-

<sup>21</sup>J. P. Oakden, *Alliterative Verse in Middle English*, 2 vols.

<sup>22</sup>E. K. Chambers insists on the term "miracle" play for both Biblical and saints' plays (*The Medieval Stage*. Oxford: the University Press, 1903, II, 104).

gical offices of the Church. The play which we are to witness tonight on our stage is not of precisely the same kind, for Charles Williams wrote his *House by the Stable* as a combination of miracle and morality play. These two types of drama were rarely fused in the Middle Ages, although the Digby manuscript contains a Mary Magdalene play which is a hybrid of this sort.<sup>23</sup> The morality play differed from the miracle play by employing abstractions or personifications as characters. Thus, we have Everyman, or Mankind, Mercy, Truth, the Seven Deadly Sins, etc. Such a story is not based on the life of Christ or the saints. Its conflict is the struggle of good and evil forces to gain the soul of Everyman.

Basically, Charles Williams' *House by the Stable* is a morality play theme, the attempt of Pride, personified as a beautiful woman, to win the soul of Man. By a peculiar modification of character types, however, Williams makes the antagonist

of Pride not a morality abstraction, but a real woman, the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is a daring liberty to take with the morality play technique, but it brings Man to the stable of Bethlehem on the night of Our Lord's birth and arranges a climax for the play in a Christmas scene, a miracle play tableau like the York "Nativity" I discussed earlier in the paper. This free experiment with characterization can be observed in other plays by Charles Williams, and reveals what one critic has called his "myth-making power"<sup>24</sup> of creating characters at once archetypal and particular.

In the play, the Virgin Mary pronounces her "*Magnificat*" at the Birth of Christ and her allegorical role as Humility, antagonist of Pride, becomes evident. She chants: "He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaid," and again, "He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble." As Mary speaks these lines Pride makes an attempt



*Knowledge  
and Good Deeds  
accompany Everyman  
to the grave.*

*Woodcut  
by Thomas Derrick.*



to distort the phrases of the *Magnificat* to her own benefit and the two voices are counterpointed in a verbal duel of genuine dramatic power.

The use of this liturgical canticle in the play shows Charles Williams' knowledge of the medieval dramatic tradition upon which he drew. That tradition owed its origin to the lyrical embellishment of the Church's liturgy, and however far the form departed from lyric in the direction of drama, the hymn or canticle still remained a perceptible part of it. Like the ancient Greek drama, which developed from the choral ode without completely severing itself from that lyrical basis,<sup>25</sup> the medieval plays continued to show their original attachment to the liturgical chants of the Divine Office. The "*Magnificat*" is therefore an appropriate form of lyrical exultation for the Nativity scene, and placed as it is near the crucial moment in the struggle for Man's soul, it gives shape to the dramatic conflict and the dénouement.

We can say, then, that the liturgical canticle enriches the play by its very connotations, by "trailing clouds of glory," so to speak. There are other elements in the Williams' drama which have literary excellence of a similar but less obvious kind. I refer to the stylistic beauty of the language and of the versification. The diction is poetic, sometimes Romantic, but it creates an illusion of colloquial speech, as Anne Ridler observes.<sup>26</sup> After a rather lengthy passage of ordinary language the dialogue will abruptly soar into the sublime or plummet into the depths of melancholy. In this way it resembles the

York "Nativity" again. On one occasion, e.g., Pride is talking with her brother, appropriately personified as Hell; Pride refers to an angel who has just been conversing with them. Hell says: "Surely that is Gabriel, that old gossip of heaven?" Pride answers indifferently, "He? I cannot tell; angels and I/ never met much, not for me to recognize." Hell answers sadly, more in soliloquy than in dialogue:

Your dove's eyes are not so sharp as mine.

I have peered more *deeps* than you; besides, *sleep* takes you sometimes; it never *takes* me, and after a while he who *wakes* for ever

finds the tingling and *aching* make sight the sharper in the land where the heart-breaking troubles are light.

I am sure it is Gabriel.<sup>27</sup>

The effect of these lines is created by such sparks of verbal beauty as the "dove's eyes" and "the heart-breaking that troubles the light." The effect is also a matter of special sound patterns characteristic of Williams' verse. He rarely uses end rhyme, but he deliberately echoes the sound of one word in another one close by, establishing a flexible pattern of interior rhyme. Perhaps you noticed also, that he uses a four-beat line with free alliterative stress — essentially the same line as that used in the York Nativity play.

#### CONCLUSION

I have attempted to explain my conviction that the medieval drama is an art form. Regardless of the didactic intentions which the authors may have harbored, it *became* an art form by slow development and long years of experimentation. In the best examples of the Latin liturgical plays and in some of the vernacular cycles the

<sup>23</sup>Text in Adams, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-42.

<sup>24</sup>Anne Ridler, "Introduction" to *Seed of Adam and Other Plays by Charles Williams* (Oxford: the University Press, 1948), p. vii.

<sup>25</sup>Walter Pater once observed that as the Greek drama developed from the choral ode, it always tended to return to the unity of a single lyric ejaculation. (*Works of Walter Pater*. London and New York: Macmillan, 1901, V, p. 203.)

<sup>26</sup>*Loc. cit.*, p. vi.

<sup>27</sup>Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 51. (Emphasis supplied.)

artistic intuitions of gifted writers found the principles upon which successful drama is created. I have discussed these principles in Aristotelian terms because the metaphysical probings of the great Greek philosopher produced the most valuable insights into the universal nature of drama. The general pattern of conflicting forces which he called *taxis* can be

found in some degrees of perfection in both Latin and vernacular plays. The detailed *lexis*, the pattern of verbal beauty and complexity, is also present in such plays. It is a sign of conscious artistry. The modern imitation of the medieval tradition is very clear in Charles Williams' *House by the Stable*, which it is now our good fortune to witness.



## EASTER

### AN ETYMOLOGICAL NOTE

It may be asked whether there is any linguistic connection between the word "East," which is the point of the compass where the sun rises at the time of the Spring equinox, and Easter, which occurs at much the same time of the year. If we refer to Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*, we learn that these words are indeed cousins, descendants of a common ancestor. What we learn of their history seems interesting enough in itself to be gathered together and printed here.

The Sanscrit word *usra*, meaning a ray of light, is the common grandparent. East is the point of the compass, the *airt* as it was called before we had compasses, where ray appears. *Usra* became, in pre-historic Greek AUSOSA, the dawn, which became in the Aeolian dialect AUOS, in the Ionian EOS, and in Latin *Aurora*, all names for rosey-fingered dawn who rises from her bed in the East. Dawn and day are both from another root, *dhegh*, which means to burn or be bright. Day is the hot or bright time, and "to dawn" is to become day.

Parenthetically, it is interesting to notice the etymological expression of the analogy between the daily cycle and the

yearly cycle.

Dawn: day spring or spring of the day.

Spring: year spring or spring of the year.

Eve: nightfall or fall of the night.

Autumn: year fall or fall of the year.

The word Easter also descends from *usra*, appearing in the Anglo-Saxon name of a pagan goddess, *Eastre*, whose festival was celebrated at the vernal equinox, one of the two days when the sun rises due east. The other day is the autumnal equinox, but as that comes in the fall, in the evening of the year when all nature is preparing for its long winter sleep, that is no time to celebrate sunrise. We learn this about the goddess Eastre from the Venerable Bede, in Chapter 15 of his book, *De Tempora Ratione*.

The Jewish Sabbath was, and is, on the Saturday. As we all know, the Christian day of rest was transferred to the following day in perpetual remembrance of Our Lord's glorious Resurrection. In honor of his title as Sun of Justice, the day of his rising was called the Sun-day. Just as, at the winter solstice, when the rising sun stops in his gradual northerly progress, and begins to move once more toward his



own region of the south, just as he is then addressed in the O Antiphon as "O Rising Sun," *O Oriens*, so each week we celebrate his Rising by naming this special day after the sun. Easter is not merely the most important Sunday, but all Sundays are so named because of Easter, because of the event which St. Paul tells us is the most important Christian fact.

And so the early English Christians did what was customary throughout the early Church and baptized the pagan custom.

They kept the solar symbolism with which the people were familiar, and gave it its full Christian signification. They called the chief Christian festival by the name of the old pagan goddess, lest the analogies between sun and sunrise, Christ and the Resurrection, be forgotten. And so we speak today not of the Pascal Time, as do most Europeans, but of Easter Time; not of Pascal day, but of Easter Sunday, the Day of the sun when the sun rises due east.

## WORKSHOP ON ART

The Catholic University of America is conducting a Workshop on Art from June 15 to 26, 1956. The lectures and seminars are planned to intensify understanding of the visual arts as a language.

*Planned for artists and teachers of art, as well as for those interested in art appreciation, the program includes slide lectures, gallery tours, student and professional exhibitions, demonstrations of techniques, and opportunities for direct experience with materials.*



There will also be four SEMINARS meeting each afternoon for a two hour period:

On Understanding Works of Art: *Katharine B. Neilson*, Curator of Education, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut.

On Techniques and Materials for the Elementary School: *Sister M. Servatia Respondeck, O.P.*, Instructor of Art, Marywood Academy, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

On Planning a Course of Study in Art for Catholic High Schools: *Sister M. Joanne Christi, S.N.D.*, Director Girls Art Department, Central Catholic High School, Toledo, Ohio.

On Metalcraft and Jewelry: *James Kuo*, Instructor in Art, Rosary Hill College, Buffalo, New York.

All seminars carry two semester hours of graduate or undergraduate credit.



A noteworthy feature of this workshop is a daily OPEN FORUM, "The Visual Language of the Artist," conducted by *Sister Esther Newport, S.P.* Slides will be shown as an aid to the study of the expressive vocabulary of the artist.



Each morning a DEMONSTRATION OF TECHNIQUES is scheduled for those who are interested. The various stages in working with materials will be displayed and questions will be encouraged. The following demonstrations are scheduled:

Silk screen printing: *Sister Esther Newport, S.P.*

Lithographic printing: *James Kuo*

Water color painting: *James Kuo*

Letter cutting in stone: *Nancy Carey*

Silver engraving: *Graham Carey*

Wood and linoleum block printing: *Sister Servatia Respondeck, O.P.*

Enameling on copper: *James Kuo*



The theme of the Workshop — ART AS LANGUAGE — will be illustrated in special LECTURES each morning, during which the following speakers will emphasize different techniques, different age levels, and different professions:

*Mrs. Alfred Berger*, President, Cincinnati Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, Cincinnati, Ohio

"Art and/or Nature" The created universe speaks to us of God and is the basis for the visual language of the artist.

*Sydney M. Kaplan*, Professor of Art, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

"Seeing is Believing" Traditional sculpture and painting always originated in ideas to be expressed.

*Graham Carey*, Member of Advisory Board, Catholic Art Association, Fair Haven, Vermont

"Architecture and Ideas" A particular church, Christ Sun of Righteousness, is an example of "architecture with a message."

*Rev. Henry S. Kawalec*, Professor of Music, Little Seminary of Buffalo, Buffalo, New York

"The Rhetoric of Music" Music strengthens the emotional tone of a situation and intensifies experiences.

*Rev. William J. Leonard, S.J.*, Associate Professor of Theology, Boston College, Boston, Massachusetts

"Liturgy for the Multitudes" The arts which serve the liturgy must each contribute its bit to the intelligibility of the liturgical whole.

*Sister M. Ruth Sperry, S.S.J.*, Head of Art Department, Nazareth College, Nazareth, Michigan

"Techniques and Ideas for Profit" A knowledge of techniques and trends is valuable to high school and college art students to facilitate their own expression.

*Sister M. Jeanne File, O.S.F.*, Chairman, Art Concentration, Rosary Hill College, Buffalo, New York

"Modern Art: Creed or Chaos?" Modern art may be evaluated in terms of its visual language and according to its intelligible content.

*Viktor Lowenfeld*, Professor of Art Education and Chairman, Division of Art Education, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Penn.

"Ideas to Spare" The work of young children is ordinarily communicative.



*Application blanks and further information may be had by writing directly to the Director of Workshops, Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C.*



# A WEDDING RING

By Graham Carey

*This paper attempts to justify what may seem to some people a gratuitous innovation, a tampering with hallowed traditional simplicities, an example of that itch to elaborate which forbids artists of a certain bent to make anything to be merely itself. But I think the innovation, if it is such, is not to be so lightly cast aside, and with this in mind will preface my remarks on the form of the ring itself with some observations which may tend to justify it, on the nature of marriage.*

## MARRIAGE, PRE-CHRISTIAN AND CHRISTIAN

In explaining to the Pharisees the essentially monogamous nature of marriage, our Lord said that although divorce had been allowed by the Mosaic Law on account of the hardness of men's hearts, "in the beginning it was not so."<sup>1</sup> An enlightened anthropology<sup>2</sup> illuminates this saying. A study of marriage among the few surviving peoples whose culture is believed closest to that of our ancestors "in the beginning," seems to indicate that for many millennia marriage remained far nearer to its pre-lapsarian perfection than the Darwinian schools of anthropology would have had us believe. Our most remote ancestors, classed economically as "food gatherers" seem to have understood, at least implicitly, that the relationship of spouses was a balance of likeness and unlikeness. In their dignity as creatures made in the image and likeness of God, husband and wife were equal. They enjoyed an equality of dignity. In the fact of their being created male and female, that is in their functional difference, they were not equal but complementary. They enjoyed dissimilarity of function.

This sexual difference and complementariness was much emphasized by the

strict division of the burden of food-gathering between the sexes — with consequences of an importance impossible to exaggerate for the subsequent history of mankind. To men fell the duty of supplying animal food, of knocking over with sticks and stones, of snaring or of digging out of their burrows any small animals available. To women fell the collecting of edible seeds, berries, nuts, stems, and roots. It is obvious that a mother with a baby slung on her back and a couple of toddlers at her side cannot be expected to hunt anything that can take fright and run away. The effects of this division of food supply were momentous. Religion and marriage degenerated from their original purity, and the directions in which these degenerations moved were largely controlled by the ways in which food-getting became easier, and by the parts played in food-gathering by men and by women. Not only in the formation of the family did husband and wife have functionally complementary parts to play, but also in the daily business of providing the family with food.

This problem of food must have pressed hard on the original food gatherers. Their necessarily wandering life prevented them from the possession or use of any but the most rudimentary artifacts. They knew neither how to make fire, chip flints, make pots, boats, or houses. They could own only what they

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<sup>1</sup>Matthew, 19,8.

<sup>2</sup>I refer to the school of the late Wilhelm Schmidt whose loyalty to anthropological and ethnological facts has caused a revolution in evolutionary thinking, and has shed much light on previously obscure problems of prehistory.

could carry with them on their ceaseless wanderings. But over the millennia, in three different places and at three different times, solutions were developed, each of which made possible a less destitute kind of life. The first of these discoveries was the art of organized hunting of large animals by disciplined teams of youths armed with flint tipped weapons. The second was the domestication of certain food plants, both grains and roots, which furnished generous stores of vegetable food. The third was the domestication of certain kinds of herding animals, notably reindeer, camels, horses, sheep, and later, cattle. Each of these discoveries provided a more abundant material life, but each, through the changes it induced in human relations, corrupted the innocence of primeval morals, distorted theological ideas, and brought marriage to a travesty of the relationship it had originally been. Here we are concerned only with the pagan distortions as they affected marriage.

Among the "higher hunting" types of culture, the well-being of the tribe, indeed its very existence, depended on the older boys and young men who made up the hunting parties. Boys and young men were thus the most important age level in society, and society came to be more and more dominated by the kind of ideas that such people have. With large supplies of meat, vegetable food became negligible, and with their economic importance, women lost their dignity. Girls were of interest only as concubines, older women as the mothers of future braves, and all women as drudges. The difference of function between men and women became perverted, and the equality of dignity became a laughing stock.

Among the Agricultural Peasants, exactly the opposite perversion of marriage appeared. The diet became vegetarian, the hunters lost their economic importance and masculine dignity. Women became the most important kind of

people, and their ideas ruled society. A woman's brother was of more importance to her than her "husband," for where descent was in the female line, her brother was a real member of the family. Often, the husband was only allowed to visit his wife by stealth. Extreme matriarchy here ruined marriage as completely as the rule of youths did among the hunters. Here again, difference of function was exaggerated and equality of dignity became an absurdity.

Among the Pastoral People, the degradation of marriage was not so complete, but the primitive marriage was marred by polygamy. Economic laws of increasing returns made success depend on the maintenance of large herds, for in small herds the animals were butchered faster than they could reproduce. Large herds necessitated large families of sons to care for them, and this usually indicated plurality of wives. This was the indulgence allowed by the law of Abraham, but "in the beginning it was not so."

The Incarnation and the establishment of the Church enabled people of good will to return to the original paradisaical perfections both in faith and morals. Christian marriage, properly understood and entered into with good will, reopens for those who accept it the closed gates of Eden. But our Western culture can no longer call itself Christian. Though Christian lives may be lived in it, the West is now pretty thoroughly secularized. And as men have fallen away from faith in Christ and in his Church, the old pagan misconceptions and the old pagan perversions of morality have returned. In the place of the ideal of Christian marriage with its balance of freedom and bondage, we find a complacently dominant masculinity which occasionally exacerbates an equally extreme feminism. Both the "masculinism" and the feminism are the results of a misunderstanding of the spheres in which equality and difference actually exist. Both may be corrected by such an



understanding.

Besides these ancient matrimonial principles, there are two others, specifically Christian, which belong to marriage. The first is that of permanence or indissolubility. The second is the truth that the *form* of marriage, that which makes it what it is in its own kind, is Christ himself. The spouses are united to one another in and through their union with him. I will end this section by summarizing the four attributes of Christian marriage with which we are at present concerned.

- 1) Spouses are equal in their dignity as human creatures.
- 2) They are different in their functions as husband and wife.
- 3) Their union is indissoluble during life.
- 4) The form of their union is the Second Person of the Trinity himself.



SYMBOLISM OF KNOTS

String was without any doubt one of the earliest and most important of inventions. To our earliest ancestors, millennia before the development of hunting, agricultural, and pastoral cultures, string was of inestimable practical use both in the snaring of animals and in the carrying of burdens. The invention of string also led the way to the rudiments of geometry — the straight line, the circle, and other plane figures being inconceivable in a stringless world. It also led directly to the discovery of knots, and these too had both practical and theoretical values, for men have al-

ways seen symbols in the knotting of strings.

Ornaments in the form of a knot, which are widely distributed in nomad art, comprise an especially suggestive symbolism, based on the fact that the different parts of the knot are opposed to one another at the same time that they are united by the continuity of the string. The knot resolves for whomever understands the principle of the knotting, of which the invention is, so to say, itself a symbol of the hidden principles of things.<sup>3</sup>

These symbols are naturally allied to those of the weaving of mats, baskets, and cloth, and of braiding and netting. They are connected with the symbolism of spiders and their webs, and with the sun as a spider.

The knots of symbolism are both bad and good — those which must be untied and those which must be kept secure. Aristotle, in speaking of the difficulties that the student of metaphysics must face, uses knot symbolism in the bad sense.<sup>4</sup> He says that it is well for the student to study the difficulties thoroughly, "for the subsequent certainty is a release from the previous perplexities, and release is impossible when we do not know the knot."

The Cretan labyrinth and its Christian descendents in the mazes which were inlaid in the floors of medieval French cathedrals had the symbolism of bad knots. Life presents us with a complicated path, full of pitfalls and blind alleys, which we can only thread if we have in our hand the saving clue. Didron says of these Christian labyrinths that "the whole device was deemed to be indicative of the complicated folds of sin by which man is surrounded, and how impossible it would be to extricate himself from them except through the assisting hand of Pro-

<sup>3</sup>Titus Burckhardt, *Art Populaire Suisse* (Basle, 1941), p.85.

<sup>4</sup>Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, Book III, 1-2.

vidence.”<sup>5</sup> Fallen man is the victim of disintegration, and is full of contradictions and involvements. We are all tied up in knots, and our task is to get ourselves straightened out. The knots must be untied and released. The complexities must be resolved, the tangled skein wound off on an orderly ball. We must find the connecting thread and follow it to the conclusion. The plot of our life is full of knotty questions, and in some way we must arrive at the denouement. If we cannot untie the Gordian knot, we must cut it.

The good knots stand for the cohesive power and the mystery of the universe, and of man’s microcosmic assimilations to it. The great knot tier is the sun. By his daily and hourly motions, the sun traces below each least twig and grass blade an endless line of shadow on the earth, for those who have eyes to see and memories to remember. He who would record and study such a trace would come to understand thereby more of the sacred science of astronomy than does many a technologist who files photographic plates and calculates in one of our observatories. In many cultures, the sun has been likened to a spider, sitting by her door at the world’s center, who out of a single unbroken clue weaves her mysterious web, full of turns, windings, and entanglements. If a man could find the outer end of this thread, as with any other maze, and follow it, he would infallibly be led back in due course to the center. He would come at last into the spider’s “parlor.” The good knots are to be untied only in the sense of being understood. At the very end of the *Commedia*, Dante exclaims: “I believe that I saw the universal pattern of this knot.”<sup>6</sup> Centuries later Vaughan asks:

And such a knot what arm dare loose,  
What life, what death, can sever,

<sup>5</sup>Quoted by W. R. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* (London, 1892).

<sup>6</sup>Dante, *Paradiso*, XXXIII, 91.

Which us in Him, and Him in us,  
United keeps forever?

#### THE TRUE LOVE KNOTS

Most simple artificial things are symbolic: an hour-glass standing for Time, a window for Illumination, a cup for Bounty, and so on. Such analogies may be called the thing’s *primary* symbol. But there may be added to these basic symbols other ideas which develop or elaborate them. The hour glass may be decorated by a line of verse, the window enriched by stories in colored glass, or the meaning of the cup made more specific by a painted vignette scene. These decorative developments and elaborations may be called *secondary* symbols. They are legitimate and even valuable within certain limits. First of all, the secondary symbol must never interfere with the clarity of the primary one. The evil of excessive ornament usually lies here. A door, for example, may be so covered with and surrounded by ornamentation that it becomes less clearly recognizable as a door, and therefore loses the primitive meaning that all doors, as such, carry. The secondary statement must not *distract* attention from the primary. And then, even more, the secondary statement must not in any way *contradict* the primary statement. We must be sure that what ideas the ornament adds are appropriate.

In the case of a wedding ring the primary symbolism is that of “the plain gold band.” The *material*, gold, is an ancient solar, and therefore Christian, symbol. The *form* is the idea of annularity, which is a matrimonial symbol. Taking matter and form together, the gold ring thus stands for Christian marriage.

The stamping of a pattern said to represent orange blossoms on the outer surface of a marriage ring does not interfere seriously either with the “goldness” of the gold or with the roundness of the ring, and so this practice is not to be criticized for interfering with the primary symbol; but it is subject to criticism on the





second score. The orange blossom is a symbol not of wifehood but of maidenhood, and therefore, while suitable as an ornament for the bride's dress, is not suitable for her ring. Such a common mistake should warn us against the careless addition of ornament to such a time-honored and richly meaningful object as is the simple gold circle.

With this caution we turn to the various knots which have been associated traditionally with steadfast love. Are any of them, and if so which, suitable to the ornamentation of a Christian wedding ring? Would a polished gold wire in which such a knot were tightly tied, make a ring that was more or one that was less significant than a gold wire left plain?

What, first of all, are the traditional true love knots? Of all the works I have consulted *The Ashley Book of Knots*<sup>7</sup> is far the richest in information regarding true love knots. Of all knots bearing this name, or having a conjugal symbolism, I will list here only those which seem suited to be the ornaments of rings.

First of all, there is the square or reef knot here shown, which suggests the firm-



est and most unbreakable handclasp, that in which the fingers of one person grasp not the fingers of the other, but the wrist. A golden wire in which such a knot is tied would have much the same meaning as a ring ornamented with clasped hands,



a form which has often in the past been used for engagement rings. As a marital symbol, the disadvantage of this knot is that the ring in which it is tied is not a

true *gimal* ring.<sup>8</sup> A *gimal* ring consists in a pair of rings which are locked together in such a way as to move freely and yet be inseparable. The ring shown here looks superficially like a *gimal* ring, but actually it is made from a single continuous wire, and is a solid single ring in two parts rather than a union of two rings. As a symbol it well illustrates the equality of dignity in the spouses, but does not well illustrate difference of function between them. It is unfortunate that this knot is not a better symbol, for it is one of the prettiest of the love knots.

Another very beautiful knot is the double Carrick bend. This may be tied in a ring in two ways: in one continuous wire (fig. 1) in which case it suffers from the same objection that I have brought against the square knot, or in two independent wires (fig. 2) in which case it forms a rather stiff *gimal* ring. Aesthetically, figure 1 is preferable to figure 2. Symbolically, figure 2 is preferable to figure 1. Both are open to the objection that in the seafaring world the double Carrick bend is famous for the ease with which it may be untied after it has been under severe strain. Where the square knot will jam and bind, the Carrick will allow itself to be easily picked apart.

But all the rest of the knots that we will consider here are combinations, of one sort or another, of pairs of overhand or simple knots. The overhand (fig. 3) is certainly one of the humblest and least pretentious of all knots. It has the shape of the lowly pretzel. Nothing could be simpler or less aesthetically promising. The two overhands shown are not identical, but are mirror images of one another — a left and a right.

Two overhands may be linked together to form a traditional lover's knot as shown in figure 4. This form is also called a "Two Stranded Matthew Walker." It

<sup>7</sup>Clifford W. Ashley, *The Ashley Book of Knots* (New York, 1944).

<sup>8</sup>Also spelled, *gemel*. Both spellings from *gemellus*, diminutive of *geminus*, twin. Twin rings.

is not aesthetically interesting, but when tied in polished wire and drawn tight, it will probably be more pleasing than is suggested by the diagram. The drawings are all to be understood as topological diagrams<sup>9</sup> rather than as indications of the appearance of finished knots. This knot gives a true *gimal* ring, as it is a linking together of two separate rings each garnished with an overhand. In my opinion its awkwardness of appearance is enough to disqualify it for the purpose we are discussing.

Besides its rating as one of the true love knots, figure 5 goes by a variety of other names: English, Englishman's, fisher, fisherman's, water, waterman's knot. Here the two overhands do not link each other, but each grasps the line in which the other is tied. When the two opposite lines are pulled, the overhands slide toward each other. In former times, quite an elaborate symbolism seems to have been read into this knot, turning on closeness with which the overhands have approached each other. When drawn up tight, they combine to form one of the least beautiful of these knots, but the chief objection for our present purpose consists in the fact that the two units are not directly linked to each other. The conventional meanings of this knot have to do with courtship rather than with the married state.

There remain four knots, figures 6, 7, 8, and 9, superficially the same, but topologically distinct, in each of which the two overhands are simply and directly linked into each other. One of these is a traditional true lover's knot, one is called the false lover's knot, and the other two, as far as I can discover, have never been rated as lover's knots at all. It remains to analyze these four forms, to point out the symbolism implicit in their various rela-

tionships of parts, and thus to justify as it seems to me, the judgment of tradition, and answer the question that this paper has raised.

All four knots are suitable for gimal rings, and allow a maximum of freedom to the two separate wires. All four pairs of overhands link each other in the easiest and most natural way, and not in the rather awkward and forced manner of figure 4. Figures 6 and 7 are alike in that the parallel lines leave the knot together in the manner of a square knot, whereas in figures 8 and 9, they leave the knot separated from one another, one above and one below in the manner of a granny knot. This is the same as to say that the pairs of overhands that make up figures 6 and 7 are dissimilar pairs, each composed of one left and one right, whereas the pairs of overhands that compose figures 8 and 9 are identical.

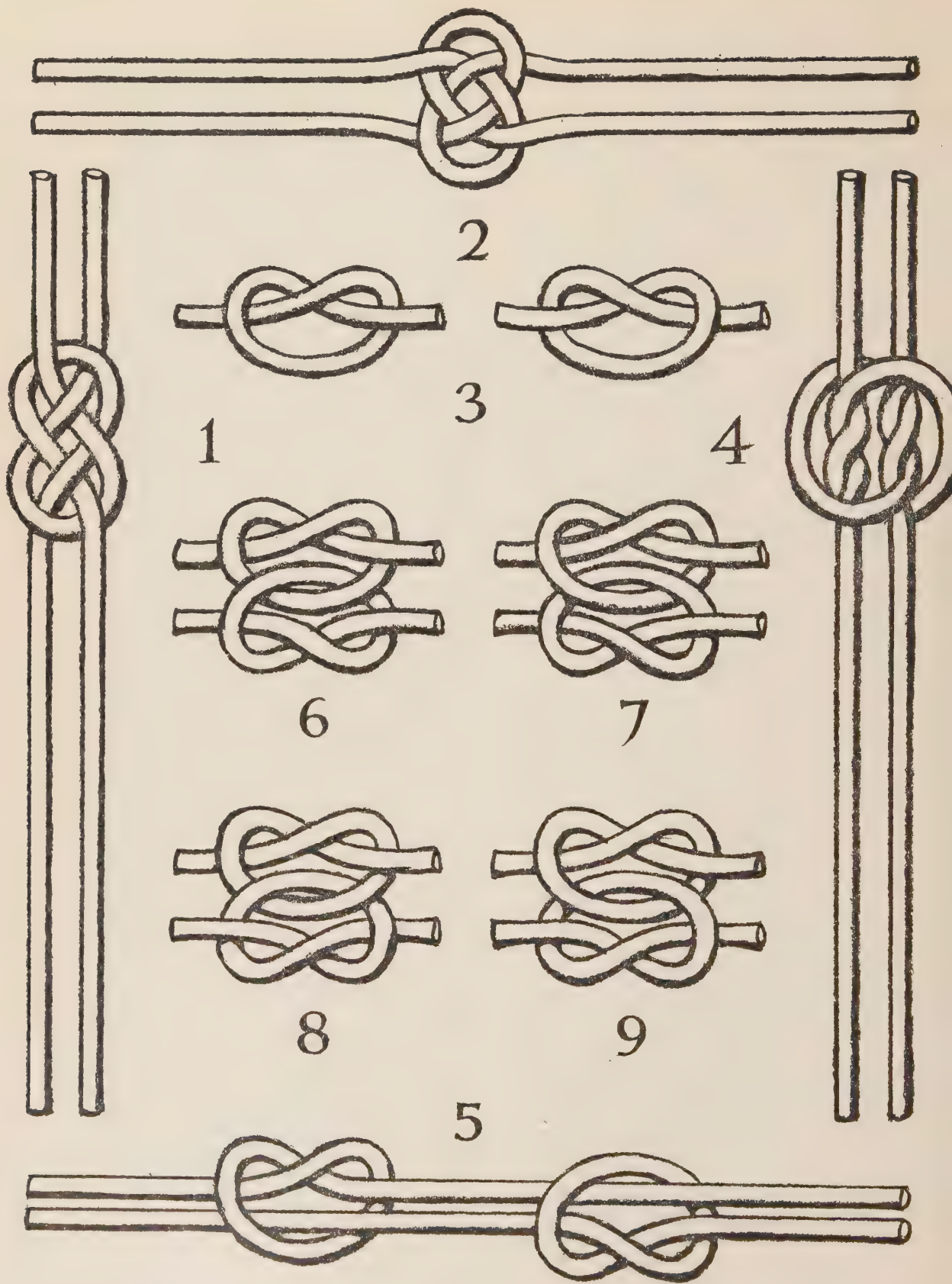
These four knots may also be divided vertically, as arranged on page 66. In figures 6 and 8, the wires are woven together in a different way from that in figures 7 and 9. In figures 6 and 8, the weave is merely one over and one under repeated eight times, as in the common or tabby weave in cloth. In figures 7 and 9, the system is more complicated, being under, over, under, under, over, over, under, over — what in cloth weaving would be called a twill.

The likeness and unlikeness of the overhands, and the simplicity or complexity of the weaves, suggest the sort of analogies that knots in their natures are capable of. What would such natural analogies be? First, the pairs of overhands may be composed either of similar or dissimilar kinds. They may be identical or they may be mirror images of one another. As both man and woman are created in God's image, and this fact is the basis of their dignity and their equality, the knot that symbolizes the equality of the spouses should consist of two identical overhands.

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<sup>9</sup>Topology is a branch of geometry under which are studied such space relationships as those exhibited by knots.





And the way in which the two overhands behave to one another, whether they weave together simply as in tabby cloth, or complexly as in twill, how they function in relation to each other and to the knot which together they compose, this may well represent the functional difference of the spouses. As the functional relationship is one of difference and complexity we will look for a knot in which it is complex, i.e., twill.

With these topological facts, and the interpretations I have suggested in view, let us look at each of the knots, figures 6, 7, 8, and 9 with an eye to their possible symbolisms. In figure 6, the overhands are unlike and the weave is tabby. Following the convention we have adopted, this knot signifies a connubial arrangement in which there is inequality of dignity and no distinction of function. It is as far from Christian marriage as one can get. It suggests a relationship between spouses somewhat like that referred to by Chesterton when he wrote, "If a boy's aunts are his pals, will it not soon follow that a boy needs no pals but his aunts?"

In figure 7, the overhands are unlike each other in just the same way, but the weave is complex rather than simple, twill rather than tabby. This knot will therefore symbolize inequality of dignity, but it will recognize difference of function. It is an improvement on figure 6, but it is still not what we are seeking. It suggests a sort of hushed seraglio sort of marriage. I have not found specific names for either of these last two knots.

Figure 8 has, however, been dignified by a name, and is listed by Ashley as the false lover's knot. It is said to be a good basis for ornamental frogs for coats and pajamas, and where the two lines at one side form a bight, to be a useful lanyard knot. Its two component overhands are identical, and its weave is tabby, so that the false lover after whom it has been named would seem to have been convinced of the equality of dignity, but un-

aware of the difference of function, perhaps a doctrinaire feminist or (more likely) "masculinist." Let him go. We are nearing the end of our search.

Figure 9 is the classical true lover's knot. It has the authority of tradition behind it, what Chesterton called "the vote of the ancestors." It is symmetrical and beautiful. The two overhands are alike and the weave is twill. It therefore expresses both the equality of the spouses in their creaturehood and divine descent, as well as the complementariness of their functions, without a recognition of which they cannot understand or undertake conjugal tasks.

Because this knot is tied in two golden rings it is indissoluble until one or both are broken. Because the rings are joined in this particular knot, the Mystery of Christ, they have great freedom of action. In becoming one with Him and with each other, husband and wife lose nothing of their personality. Two very humble forms, unpromising enough in appearance, have combined in a particular way to produce a third form, quite different from and far fairer than either.

The knot they combine to make is a good knot, a holy mystery, and one which at all costs must be kept tightly tied. In everything that does not involve the knot itself, the two rings are free. By the knot they are firmly bound. The dignity of husband and wife as images and likenesses of God demands that freedom. The nature of the Sacrament they have received demands that bondage.

Such a ring does seem to add to the signification of the simple golden circle, without subtracting anything from it. The secondary symbolism enforces rather than weakens the primary. Such a ring seems to express marriage as it was "in the beginning" and that paradisaical perfection to which Christ, after the long millennia of paganism, at last restored it. The spouses are joined in the Mystery of the Knot, and the Knot is Christ.





## ON WEATHER COCKS

In his *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* (I, 1, ch.1, xxii) William Durandus has this to say concerning the cock which decorates the highest point in our Western churches:

"When a cock is set upon a church he symbolizes the preacher, for the cock watches throughout the darkness of night, indicates the passage of the hours by his crowing, wakes up those who are asleep, and greets the approach of day. But especially he wakes himself up and gets himself into the mood for singing, beating his sides with his wings. All these things are not without their meaning. The night represents this world, those who are asleep are the children of darkness at rest in their sins. The cock stands for the preachers who preach with loud voice and arouse the slumberers, that they may throw off the deeds of darkness. "Woe to those who sleep," they cry. "Arise, O sleeper!" They proclaim the light to come since they preach the Last Judgment and the Glorious Future. But before preaching virtue to others, they are wise enough to arouse themselves from the sleep of sin, and to chastise their own bodies. For as the Apostle himself bears witness: "I chastise my body and bring it unto subjection, lest by chance I, who have preached to others, myself become the object of reproof." And again the cock is the symbol of those preachers who face the storm, standing up courageously to the enemies of God, rebuking them and convicting them of their crimes, in the hope that

they may not be among the hirelings who fly at the approach of the wolf. The iron rod on which the cock stands represents the inflexibility of the preacher's word, and shows that he should not be animated by a merely human but by the Divine Spirit, as it is written: "If anyone speak, let it be the speech of God." And because this rod itself is placed above the cross, on the pinnacle of the church, that is a symbol that the Scriptures are accomplished and confirmed."

It is thus evident that in the 13th century a cock at the top of a steeple was symbolic. Furthermore it is clear that he was moveable and acted as a weathervane. But there were cocks on the spires of churches long before this time.

In his *Life of St. Swithin*, the 10th century writer, Walstan, gives a truly poetical account of the cock who occupied the summit of the church at Winchester.

"A cock of elegant shape, glittering with the resplendence of gold, graces the pinnacle of the tower. He looks down on the earth from his height, and lords it over all the countryside. Before his face are the brilliant stars of the North, and the constellations of the Zodiac. In his proud talons he holds the scepter of command. Below him he sees all the people of Winchester. In his pride he dominates all the West, and soaring in the air above them, he is visible to the other cocks, his humble subjects. He faces the rain-bearing winds and, whirling around, heads into them audaciously. The terrible shocks

of the tempest do not disturb him. He courageously welcomes both the snow and the buffeting of the hurricane. He alone sees the sun sink into the ocean at the end of its course, and it is for him to salute the first rays of the dawn. The traveller who spies him from afar, fixes on him his gaze. Forgetting the journey he still has to make, he forgets his weariness. He presses forward with a new eagerness. Though in reality still far from his jour-

ney's end, the sight of the cock persuades him that he has already reached it."

This symbol of vigilance, of struggle against the force of the wind, placed at the highest point of our religious buildings is characteristic of the West. The cocks on the spires of the churches of southern Italy are another matter. We only hope cocks will regain their former place. They have their use, be it only as weathervanes.

## BOOK REVIEW

### *The Psalms: Fides Translation*

Introduction by Mary Perkins Ryan

Chicago, Illinois: Fides Publishers Association, 1955. 306 pp. \$3.95.

In 1945 the Holy See published a new translation of the Psalms from the original Hebrew into Latin. The object of this new translation was to make the Psalms more understandable. Since that time there have appeared in English no less than ten translations of this Latin version. We would hardly expect to find any new translation being published, for any additional ones would seem superfluous. That was my first thought when I heard that Fides was publishing another version.

But a work of this nature should be judged in view of its end, which is expressed in the introduction: "to provide a clear, modern translation that gives due attention to the requirements not only of individual reading, but also of recitation aloud and of singing." This end has, I think, been achieved in this translation. While it lacks some of the beauty of Msgr. Knox's translation, it makes up for that lack by its simplicity and by the ease with which the Psalms may be said or sung aloud.

The Psalms are prayers composed to be sung. As an aid to praying these songs of God, Mary Perkins Ryan has written the introduction and the notes to this latest version of the Psalms in English.

They are an important part of the book and a very valuable contribution to the prayer life of the Catholic layman.

In recent years it has been more and more forcefully pointed out by the popes that the indispensable source of the Christian life and Catholic Action is the liturgy, the Mass and the Divine Office. The Psalms play a very important role in this liturgy. The better we understand the Psalms the more completely will we be able to profit by the liturgical life of the Church for our own personal development and for that of the Mystical Body.

But there are obstacles to praying the Psalms. They are works of a different age and culture from our own. There are, too, Hebrew expressions which defy easy translation into the English idiom, but Mrs. Ryan comes to our aid in these difficulties and explains the Hebraisms clearly and accurately. In her introduction she points out, in a manner calculated to inspire as well as to instruct, some simple rules for adapting the ideals and the contents of the Psalms to our own times and lives.

If you do not own a copy of the Psalms, this book is worth your investment. If you have never *prayed* the Psalms, this book will teach you how. If you have prayed the Psalms with difficulty before, this book will give you a greater appreciation and understanding.

*Rev. Thomas F. Hinsberg*



# VALUES IN CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS

*Drawing upon his own rewarding experiences in encouraging the creative development of children, Professor Lowenfeld distinguishes between the positive values inherent in children's spontaneous drawings and the negative effects of repetition of stereotyped patterns common in coloring books, workbooks, and painting by numbers. This paper was originally presented during the Workshop on Art in Christian Education held at The Catholic University of America, in June, 1955.*

*By Viktor Lowenfeld*

In our educational system everything still points toward learning, which in most instances means acquiring knowledge. We are still too much concerned with the teaching of the three R's. Yet we know only too well that knowledge, if it cannot be used by a free mind, will neither be beneficial nor will it make people happy. Our one-sided education with the emphasis on knowledge has neglected those attributes of growth which are responsible for the development of the individual's sensibilities and his spiritual life, as well as for his development as a well-balanced human being who lives coöperatively in his society. The growing number of emotional and mental illnesses in this nation — the largest in any nation — as well as our inability to accept human beings as human beings regardless of race, creed, and color, is a frightening sign and vividly points out that education so far has failed in its most significant aims. While our high achievements in specialized fields, particularly in the sciences, have improved our material standards of living, they have also diverted us from those values which are related to our emotional and spiritual needs. They have introduced a false set of values which has little or no relationship to the innermost needs of an individual. In a well-balanced educational system, in which the development of the *whole* individual is stressed, each child's

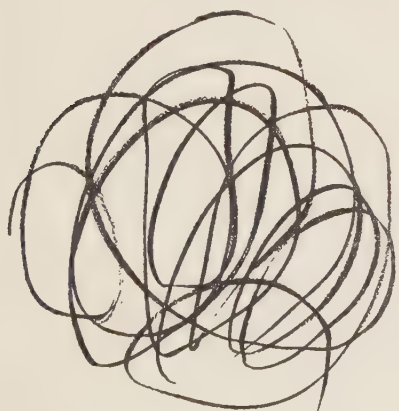
thinking, feeling, and perceiving must be equally developed in order that the potential creative abilities of each individual can unfold. I firmly believe that art education, introduced in the early years of childhood may well mean the difference between an adjusted, happy human being and one who, in spite of all learning, will remain an unbalanced individual who has difficulty in his relationship to his environment. Because perceiving, thinking, and feeling are equally stressed in any creative process, art may well be the necessary balance for the child's intellect and for his emotions.

## EFFECT OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS

To understand the effect of the creative process on the child, and how the various components of growth are part and parcel of it, let us try to find out what actually goes on in Johnny's mind while he is busy with his painting.

First of all, when he begins he must think of "something." Often this "something" seems insignificant *to us*. For the child, however, it always means a confrontation with his own self, with his own experience. Some children cannot think of "something" because they either lack sensitive relationships to meaningful experiences or their minds are blocked and go around in circles. If they lack sensitive experiences, they need to be motivated. If their minds are blocked and move around in stereotypes, their frame of reference needs to be extended. This

extension of the frame of reference constitutes one of the most important principles in art education, or indeed, in education in general. Let me, therefore, go into greater detail in explaining this important principle. To extend the frame of reference implies that we must always start with the child's thinking and feeling on *his* level and stage of *his* development. If, for instance, Mary scribbles timidly in a corner of her paper, it would be useless to tell her to scribble larger, or cover the whole paper. Such suggestions would not encourage the freedom necessary for larger motions, nor would they permit her to discover the meaningfulness of the paper which is at her disposal. For that, her frame of reference needs to be enlarged, that is, the scribbling motion has to be extended to other motions, the area on the paper to other areas in order to make her experience meaningful. In this case one could ask Mary, "Have you been in a skating rink? Suppose you have the whole space for yourself, would you only skate in the corner?" — "Show me how you would skate." — "Suppose the sheet of paper is your skating rink. Let's skate with our crayon on it." One motion has



been extended to another motion and has thus achieved greater significance. One area has been related to another area in relationship to an experience more meaningful to the child than obviously scribbling has been. This extension of the

frame of reference has sensitized the child both to his own motions as well as to the meaningfulness of the drawing area.

"My child only draws airplanes." — "My child only draws guns," etc. These are remarks which we continually hear, both from parents and teachers. "Don't draw these silly guns!" would obviously not contribute to the child's greater flexibility and understanding of his environment. On the contrary, it may for the moment deprive him of his feeling of security which he obviously found in such repetitive statements. To repeat the same thing over and over merely expresses the child's inability to adjust himself to new situations. For him his stereotyped repetition constitutes an escape which he always uses whenever he cannot face a new situation; for example, a tantrum represents an escape mechanism which a child introduces whenever he is unable to adjust himself to a new situation. Mary may be peacefully playing with her doll, when you suddenly interrupt her and tell her that her time is over and that she has to go to bed. Because Mary cannot adjust herself quickly to the new situation she may escape into a tantrum. There is nothing easier than to condition her gradually to what will come and thus prevent such a quick and drastic adjustment. "Mary will your doll soon go to sleep? You know that soon you will have to go to bed, too." This can be repeated, depending on the adjustability of the child, until the "final step" no longer will represent a decisive change. In art education such conditioning to a new situation often constitutes an important part of the motivation, especially for the extension of the frame of reference. If Johnny draws airplanes only, the important fact is to make the airplane meaningful by extending his frame of reference. Again we have to start on the level of the child. If all airplanes are the same, it would be a discovery for the child to distinguish between big and small planes. "Where does



your plane fly?" — "High above ground or low?" — "Does it fly through clouds?" "Where does it land?" — "Where do people get out?" To make the plane and its environment meaningful to the child, the teacher also must identify herself with the child's needs, in particular in his relations and feelings for airplanes. Only then have we extended the frame of reference from the child's stereotyped meaningless airplane-symbol to an expression of a meaningful variety of airplanes, as well as from a meaningless background area to a meaningful space which has become part of his experience.

Fortunately, most of our children are free and not bound up with stereotypes. Johnny, for instance, *can* think of something, because he has experienced something. As he "thinks" of it, his thoughts concentrate on the experience to be painted. His thought process — the ability to think for himself and to concentrate on something — becomes stimulated. This initial intellectual process is an important part of creative activities. It is self-evident that a child will include only those things which he knows and which are important to him. Important to him, however, are only those things to which he has established some more or less sensitive relationship. Thus his emotional relationship will play an important part in his creative process. Let us say that Johnny wants to paint "how he plays with other children in the yard." For Johnny, the apple tree in the yard may have big buds because he was watching them grow. He includes the buds in his painting because they are important to him. They are part of his knowledge, his observation, and his experience. Bob was using the tree only for climbing; buds had no meaning and were therefore not included in his painting. Johnny was interested in Mary's dress. He likes Mary. His painting indicates more details on Mary than elsewhere. He paints Mary much larger than anything else because she is important to

him. His painting, like that of all children, is not an objective representation. On the contrary, it expresses his likes and dislikes, his emotional relationships to his own world and the world which surrounds him. It also expresses not only what he knows, but also what he feels, sees, and touches, if he has become sensitively aware of it.

To understand this fully, let us go back to our own experiences. We, too, can only recall things to the extent to which either our knowledge or our individual emotional relationships permit us. Let us think, for instance, of a traffic light. We all know that it consists of three different colored lights. Our knowledge has registered that. We will, however, not be so sure with regard to the location of the colors if we have not become sensitized to them. Is the green light on top, or the red? Only the degree of intensity with which we have observed it, will be responsible for our recalling it. Once we have become sensitized toward this particular location by conscious observation, that is, by seeing in detail, we shall incorporate this newly gained relationship into our permanent understanding. Such sensitive relationships, can, however, be fostered by experience which we have with things. If, for instance, we were color blind, we would have to depend on the location of the lights, and would very soon have to become aware of the red light on the top. If we had to install the lights, we would, by necessity, have to become aware of their location. But emotional experience with things will only intensify our relationships to environment. It is not the same whether we experience the vastness of the sea with an underlying feeling of loneliness, all by ourselves or accompanied by the noise of countless people happily splashing in the oncoming waves. Needless to say, the more sensitive relationships we establish toward experiences in general, the richer is our life, for what is true about the traf-

fic light is also true about flowers, trees, textures, colors, and all that surrounds us.

Johnny, therefore, has given us an intimate understanding, through his painting, of the type of relationships which he has established to the things he represented. Of course, as he grows, these relationships change. He will know more about things, and his emotional interest will also shift. The greater the variety in his paintings, the more flexible will he be in his relationships, and vice versa. *It must be remembered, however, that it is one of the most important tasks of the teacher to encourage and motivate continually such sensitive, rich, and flexible relationships.*

As Johnny continues to paint his backyard scene, he adds things according to the significance they have to him. Perhaps the swings on the apple tree come first to his mind. He loves to swing on them. But there is Bob. Johnny does not like him because he always teases him. So according to his likes and dislikes, in color and placement he gives expression to his dislike for Bob in his painting. Johnny is weaker than Bob; he can never show his dislike directly, but in his painting he can. He feels better afterwards, just as we feel better after we have talked about a disagreeable thing with a good friend. It bothers us to keep things all to ourselves, to have them "eat into us."

It is needless to say that everything that Johnny does, and to which he is exposed, has some influence upon him. In his creative work, if he continuously attempts to relate all his experiences, such as thinking, feeling, perceiving (seeing, touching, and so on), to one another, this must also have a unifying effect on his personality. This has been established experimentally. For instance, in a child who scribbles only in one corner, the meaningful realization of the whole paper relative to his motions definitely affects his whole personality.

As Johnny goes on to paint his back-

yard picture, he includes Rowdy, his dog, and also Dad, who fixes the fence. Rowdy is digging a hole into the lawn. Johnny is quite aware that this may spoil the lawn, and Dad does not like it. Dad fixes the fence. Johnny could not draw Dad without putting himself into his place while fixing the fence. This makes him understand Dad better. He even thinks how Dad lifts the heavy hammer to drive the post into the ground. Dad must be strong. It is one of the important attributes of any creative process that we become more sensitive to things with which we are dealing. If Johnny thinks of his environment more sensitively, he has been taught to do one of the most important things that we need in the world today — *to become more sensitive to the needs of others.* This is one of the most vital prerequisites for a coöperative attitude. In putting himself into the place of Dad in his picture, Johnny has just experienced this vital need.

Johnny not only becomes more sensitive to the things he paints, he also develops a great sensitivity to the materials he uses. He learns by experience that the lines of a crayon are different if he puts different pressure on it, that he can use the broad side of the crayon, that water color merges easily and produces beautiful mixtures — all this he learns by trial and error, and soon incorporates what he has learned into his painting. To discover and to explore what different art materials can do, "to learn their behavior" is also one of the important abilities which a child develops through creative activities. Johnny even learns to predict their behavior; he knows exactly how much he can bend wood, what he can do with wire, what colors to mix in order to get the one he wants. He has become *so sensitive* to the reactions of paint that he uses great skill in handling them. This development of skill which is only a result of the urge for expression is also a vital part of the creative process.



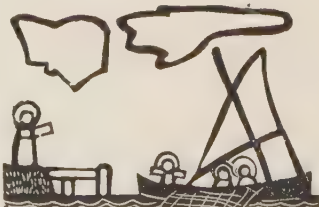
When Johnny began to paint his back-yard picture, he had to decide where to put the tree, the swings, the fence, Mary, Dad, Rowdy, and Bob. Thus, he had to "organize" all these things meaningfully. What he knew of the tree, the swing, Mary, the fence, and Dad, and Bob, had to be related to how he felt about these things, and this had to be related to the location of the things on the paper. He also gave some definite color and shape to the objects which he painted. He had to invent and to explore his forms in relationship to the material he used. It is needless to say that all this organization takes place in the child subconsciously. But it all belongs to Johnny's personality, and is part and parcel of the creative process and the resulting aesthetic product, for aesthetic growth consists of growth from a chaotic to a harmonious organization of expression in which feeling, perceiving, and thinking are completely integrated.

Virginia, for instance, cannot express herself as flexibly as Johnny. She is tense and has developed a certain emotional inflexibility. She cannot meet new situations, as Johnny does. Her mind does not adjust itself as easily to her environment and therefore she has established a certain sameness of reactions. She always draws the same kind of patterns. Her mind is fixed on one thing — and this she keeps repeating. This repetition gives her a certain security. She knows she can repeat it again and again. She also knows that she does not need to meet new situations when she draws. It is a false security into which she escapes whenever she cannot do justice to a situation.

Johnny, through his varied motivations in art, could adjust himself flexibly to any situation which he was facing. During the creative process he not only used his intellect in finding out about the tree, the swing, the fence, Rowdy, Dad, and the other things, but he gave expression to his emotional relationships to Mary, his dog, and even to the tree, because he loved to climb it. He observed the buds and Mary's dress, and became more sensitive to his environment. He independently created his own forms and concepts. By putting himself into the place of others he learned the needs of others, one of the important aspects of social growth. By organizing all his experiences into a creative product he integrated all these experiences into an inseparable whole, the aesthetic product.

#### NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF WORKBOOKS AND COLORING BOOKS

Instead of promoting education in art as a means to develop fully the child's personality for a better and more adjusted life, we often unconsciously thwart an individual by confronting him with education "in patterns." One of the most common means used in this direction are work books with stereotyped repetitions of adult patterns and coloring books in which children are encouraged to repeat performances which have no relationship to their own individual expression. Lately "painting by numbers" has been added to the stereotyped imitative methods as a disgrace of human inventions. Such regimented forms of expression not only disregard the individual child and his needs but clearly counteract any democratic



principles by denying an individual the right to his own expression. In times like these in which individual freedom is endangered by political forces, education has to be especially mindful of its methods.

To understand the effect of coloring and workbooks, which contain such repetitive stereotyped forms, let us go through the process a child goes through while using them, and let us also try to discover the after-effects this process may have on our children.

Let us assume that the first picture a child has to fill in is that of a dog. As soon as the child is confronted with the task of following a pre-determined outline, we have prevented him from solving his own relationships creatively. His relationship to a dog may be one of love, friendship, dislike, or fear. There is no opportunity for him to express his relationship and thus relieve himself of tensions of joy, hatred, or fear. There is no place in coloring books to express anxieties. There is not even a place for the individual differences of Johnny and Mary. In filling the outline drawings, children are regimented into the same type of activity, with no provision for their differences as individuals. Of course, some children, unaware of all these implications, and by nature somewhat lazy, enjoy coloring the dog; but as they color it with crayon they realize that they could never draw a dog as well as the one they color. They may even be very proud when they have finished it. After all, they have colored the dog. Next time, in school or elsewhere, when one of these children is asked to draw something, he remembers the dog in the coloring book. Realizing that he could not compete, he says, quite logically, "I can't draw."

I have heard many teachers or parents say, "But my children *love* coloring books." This is quite true. Children, however, usually do not discriminate between things good for them and things detri-

mental. That they love things is not always an indication that those things are good for them. Most children prefer sweets to vegetables, and without doubt would always prefer them. This, however, does not mean that we should adjust their diet to sweets. Children, once conditioned to over-protection, love it, too. In fact they become so dependent on it that they can no longer enjoy their freedom. In countless cases I have seen parents doing everything for their children — children who simply stretch out their leg and their shoe is laced, then turn around and their hair is combed — almost automatically as on an assembly line. These are the children who sit in the midst of their toys and don't know what to do with them, or go to camp and sit lonely in a corner while others enjoy their freedom and play.

A child, once conditioned to coloring books, will have difficulties in enjoying the freedom of creating. The dependency which such methods engender is devastating. It has been revealed by experimentation and research that more than half of all children, once exposed to coloring books, lose their creativeness and their independence of expression, and become rigid and dependent.

Some teachers may still tell you that with the coloring book the child learns the discipline of staying within the lines of a given picture (area). It has been proved by experiment that this is not true at all. More children color beyond the given boundaries in coloring books than in objects they draw themselves. If Johnny draws *his* dog, he has a greater incentive to remain with *his* boundaries than if he colors a dog in a coloring book to which he has no relationship.

Thus it has been proved beyond any doubt that such imitative procedures as found in coloring and workbooks make a child dependent in his thinking (they do not give him the freedom to create what he wants); they make the child inflexible, because he has to follow a pattern he has



been given; they do not provide emotional relief because they give a child no opportunity to express his own experience and thus acquire a release for his emotions; they do not even promote skills and discipline, because the child's urge for perfection grows out of his own desire for expression; and finally, they condition a child to adult concepts which he cannot produce alone, and which therefore frustrate his own creative ambitions.

The great contribution of free artistic expression to our educational system and to our society is the emphasis on the individual and his *own* potential creative abilities and above all the power of art to integrate harmoniously all the components of growth which are responsible for a well-balanced human being. As Johnny painted his backyard scene, he had to become aware of what to include in it. This intellectual awareness of himself and his environment is an important part of intellectual growth. As he expressed his *likes* in Mary and his *dislikes* in Bob, his *affection* and *fears* for Rowdy, he documented his *emotional* relationship to his environment. But as he faces it he learns to adjust himself to it. Thus he undergoes one of the most important phases of emotional growth. He could never have depicted Dad fixing the fence, without *put-*

*ting himself into his place. To identify himself with the needs of others, however, is one of the most important prerequisites for coöperation, for social growth. Johnny observed* the buds, the trees, the texture of Mary's dress. He became sensitive to the differences in color in his painting. His perceptual growth has become stimulated by the creative process. Even physically he felt the urge to coördinate his hands with his vision. But it was through his aesthetic product that he showed his ability to organize harmoniously his thinking, feeling, and perceiving, and, most significantly, he independently created his own concepts of himself and the world which surrounds him. He explored, investigated, and experimented with his media of expression.

Because every creative process involves the *whole* child, art education may well become the catalyst for a child-centered education in which the individual and his creative potentialities are placed above subject matter; in which an inner equilibrium will be as important as scientific achievements.

For our children, however, artistic expression should become their friend to whom they turn with their joys and sorrows, their fears and frustrations, whenever words become inadequate.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### *Around the Year with the Trapp Family.*

TRAPP, MARIA AUGUSTA

New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1955, 251 pp., illustrated by Rosemary Trapp and Nikolaus E. Wolff, \$3.95.

Most observers are middle-aged. Those who are young and gay love to celebrate. The young friends of Christ knew how to rejoice with him while the middle-aged Pharisees stood around and criticized. We too have grown old in spirit and become observers. We stand around and watch

Christ as he brings his life to others "around the year," but we have been looking at the whole affair from the outside. In the process we have lost the fun and the joy of our religion.

There is no doubt that we can measure our own spiritual health and vigor by the Christian joy which we experience in living each day under God. Let us be very honest. Is our religion a thing of joy or do we find it a rather uncomfortable straight-jacket? Have we been only "looking on" or do we really put on Christ

each day and "get in on the act."

A Catholic mother who has been playing a star role in living the year with Christ is Maria Augusta Trapp. She has given us a new book of secrets for a healthier and younger and happier Christian life. *Around the Year With the Trapp Family* can become our script for getting in on the act of celebrating both feast and fast with the Church. Our Holy Father stated Maria Trapp's theme a number of years ago in an official pronouncement when he told all Catholics that if they would have the inner joys of religion they should celebrate their feasts. Yet our Holy Father knows so well that merely making an official statement does not really move hearts to action nor even teach the truth. Again and again he has encouraged us to live the feasts because in that life we shall learn more of our religion than in all the official pronouncements which the Church has ever made. If we might visit Maria Trapp and her family we could best learn by doing these things with her, but since that is not possible this book is the next best thing.

We shall not read many pages before we discover that this is no mere handbook of activities in art and musical selections. This is much more than suggested recipes for feast-day tables. This book is a course in applied liturgy. The heart and center of her family's work is to give expression to "that wonderful eternal rhythm of high and low tide that makes up the year of the Church: times of waiting alternate with times of fulfillment, the lean weeks of Lent with the feasts of Easter and Pentecost, times of mourning with seasons of rejoicing." Art and music become the handmaids of the Christian family to make Christ welcome in the home. Every day of every year is a time of celebration because Christ is with us. This realization of the presence of Christ in the Christian home is the only sound motivation for any renewal of tradition or custom. Because the Bridegroom is with us, we celebrate;

and we rejoice always because he is always here.

Maria Trapp does not spend many pages telling us how to paint or draw or make music. She is too intent on teaching us the greater art of how to feast and how to fast. In addition to ideas for making simple figures for the Christmas crib and designs for Easter eggs, there are wonderful suggestions for the making of happy Christian marriages. In addition to the light-hearted fiddle tunes of Mardi Gras, there are moving antiphons from the Divine Office. Added to all sorts of recommendations for family reading, there is the reverent renewal of the Sunday with its sacramental reading of Holy Scripture.

Only one fear closes in on the reader as the rich pattern of family feasts spreads out around the year of the Trapp Family; and that is, "Is this book written too late?" Twenty years ago there might have been more family traditions and customs on which to build. Two wars have uprooted seventy per cent of our families and most mothers are not so strong in spirit as Maria Trapp. She herself admits it is not easy to create a new environment where a family can grow up to God. Then, too, the visible language of home art and the audible language of home music have almost become dead languages. How many families do you know that sing together, or if they do, where is another family to dance with them? Unless the feastday custom rises from deep sincerity and conviction it will result in neither the inner joy of religion nor enough apostolic spirit to win others.

This book could be a great help to a priest who so often struggles vainly to apply liturgy to lay life. It could be a most helpful teacher's guide in the Catholic schools which so often fail to put doctrine into action. To those who have ways of their own to celebrate, to those who have a place apart where the family can live the feast intimately, to those



who hunger for closer contact with Christ, this is your book. Unless something is done soon by church, school, and home — working together so that the Year of Grace becomes a Year of Joy — we shall continue to spawn more middle-aged children who look on their religion as something merely to memorize and to observe.

*Mrs. Alfred Berger*

WINZEN, O.S.B. VERY REV. DAMASUS

### *Symbols of Christ*

New York: P. J. Kennedy and Sons, 1955. 104 pp., drawings by William V. Cladek, \$2.50.

In his introduction to this important little book, Father Damasus suggests that "Even in our day, many Catholics . . . are unaware of the power the symbol has to heal the breaches that rend the world by fitting the visible to the invisible, the material to the spiritual, the divine to the human, the individual to society." We can discover God only by the use of analogy. The symbol is the multi-vistaed analogy. Therein lies the power of the symbol: it is a key which man is given to use in the basic search for the meaning of his life, the search for God. The tragedy, of course, is that we live in an age when the symbol is ignored and little effort is taken

to understand it.

*Symbols of Christ* is a simple but beautiful remedy to this tragic situation. In it Father Damasus takes the most important symbols of Christ from the Old and New Testaments — the Seal of the Living God, the Tree of Life, the Holy Mountain, the Burning Bush, the Brazen Serpent, the Star of Jacob, the Rod of Jesse, the Key of David, the Cornerstone, the Sun of Justice; and from the New Testament, the Lamb of God, the Door, the Fountain of Life, the True Vine, the Grain of Wheat, the Bread of Life, the Precious Pearl, the Fish of the Living, the Alpha and Omega — and sets down basic biblical quotations relating to each. He then gives to each symbol its full cosmic and scriptural interpretation. One of the most welcome aspects of this book is the presentation of these symbols in such a way as to harmonize, and unify the two Testaments.

Each symbol is boldly illustrated by the excellent drawings of William V. Cladek. These are printed in red to distinguish them from the printed text. The foreword is by Father H. A. Reinhold in his usual vigorous style.

To achieve its full purpose, this little book should be read, re-read and meditated on.

*Rev. Thomas Phelan*

## NOTES

It has been pointed out to the Editor that the photographs illustrating the conical chasuble on page 11 of the Christmas, 1955, issue, and their captions, might easily be misunderstood. These illustrations do not show how the conical chasuble may be worn today. They show how it might be worn if the *Ritus Servandus* of the Roman Missal were changed and a return to former practice allowed.

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE to prepare the slate for 1956 election of officers has been announced by Father

Phelan, vice president of the C.A.A. The committee is composed of Sister Ruth, S.S.J., Nazareth, Michigan; Ade de Bethune, Newport, Rhode Island; and Mrs. Nelson Mercer, Buffalo, New York, Chairman.

OUR COVER DESIGN, by William V. Cladek, shows the Sun of Justice, Conqueror of sin and death.

PROCEEDINGS of the 1955 Workshop on Art are now available from Catholic University Press for \$2.50.

## CONTRIBUTORS

REV. DAMASUS WINZEN, O.S.B., PH.D., is founder and prior of Mount Savior, Elmira, New York.

ELLEN CATHERINE DUNN, PH.D., is Assistant Professor of English at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C.

VIKTOR LOWENFELD is Professor of Art Education and Chairman of the Division of Art Education at the Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania.

MRS. ALFRED BERGER is president of the Cincinnati Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women.

REV. THOMAS F. HINSBERG, M.A., S.T.L., is assistant pastor of St. Joan of Arc Church, St. Clair Shores, Michigan.



